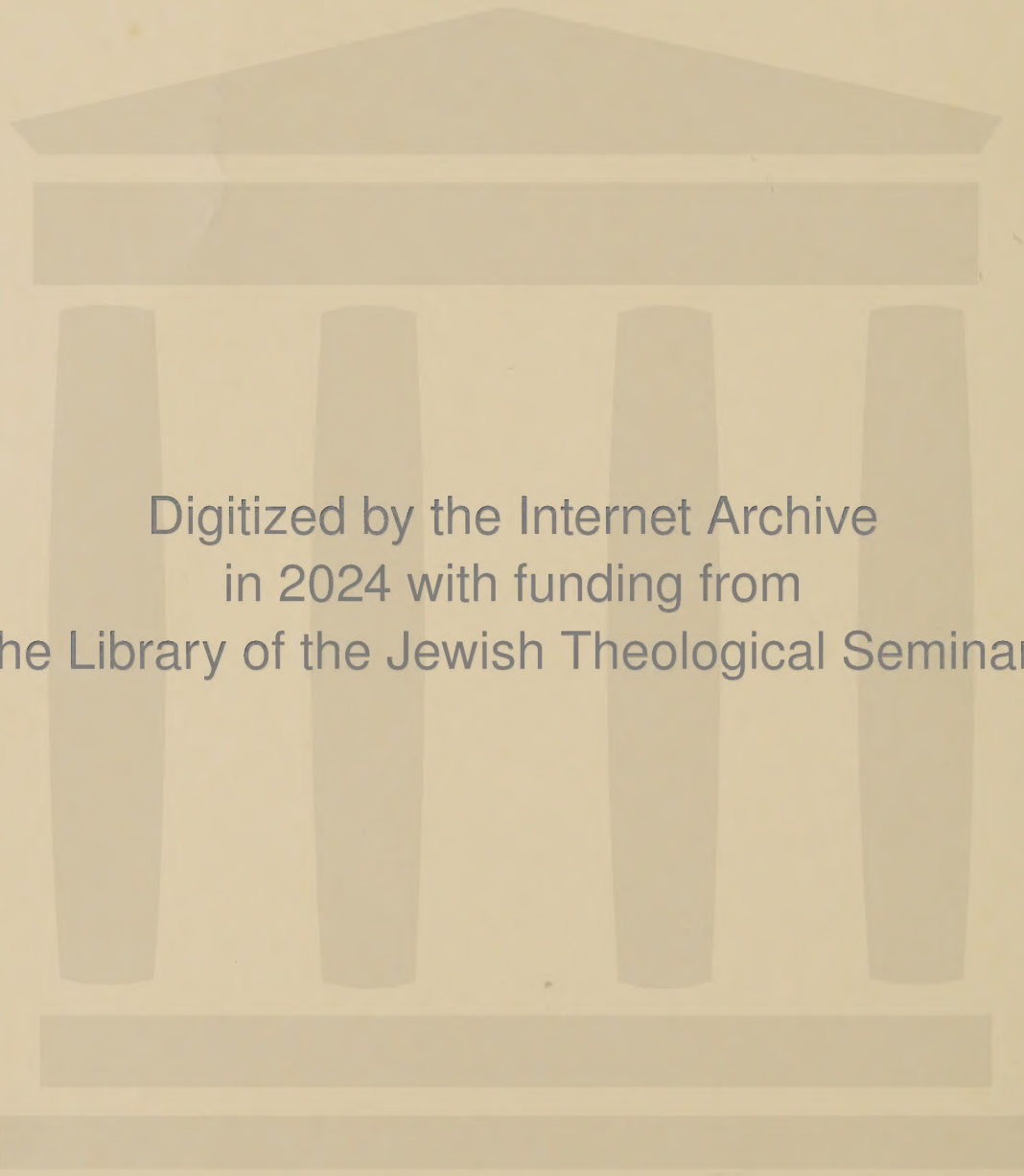


M. KAPLAN DIARIES - TRANSCRIPTION

④

1922 DEC 10 - 1925 JAN 5



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2024 with funding from  
The Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary



When I rose to speak I was in no position to recast<sup>ed</sup> what I had planned to say, in keeping with the occasion and the audience. My mind did not work fast enough. As soon as I gave evidence of entering into a somewhat lengthy ~~discourse~~ discourse I noticed signs of impatience which disconcerted me. The result was that I made a veritable fool of myself.

My failure on so important an occasion has been preying on my mind. Perhaps it is a blessing in disguise. It will once and for all teach me to recognize my limitations, and stop the negotiations between Wise and myself which have done me spiritually more harm than good.

\* \* \* \*

Sunday, December 10, 1922

The cloud that overhung my mind during the previous week is almost dissipated. Here are the gratifying experiences that have brought back the sunshine to me:

Last Friday night Judith happened to mention her diary. I took advantage of what I thought might prove to be an opportunity of my getting her to understand my motive in having crossed her will the day when she indited those bitter charges against me in her diary. This month there began to appear in the Atlantic Monthly excerpts from John Davids Long's diary which he began keeping when he was nine years old. I had the copy of the Atlantic Monthly brought to the table and asked Lena to read <sup>from</sup> of it. When she came to the part where the father of John Lang inserted his comment after having looked over what his son had written, I said to Judith, "How about my seeing your diary?" She at first pretended she did not know where it was. But when Hadassah offered to get it Judith got ahead of her, and after a while brought in her diary with the pages in which she poured out her wrath upon me torn out. She apparently tore them out before bringing it to me. Of her own accord she remarked that she had torn out some pages because they contained matter that she did not care to retain in her diary. Later



of the  
Lands  
to

As soon as I had finished  
talk about it. As soon as I had finished  
because she was far too ashamed to tell  
she had torn out those pages and

As a result of the fiasco on the market  
John D. brought back some of the  
the Sabbath was successful despite my  
believe to put me back into society again

This request was made as

100-23300



on when Lena tried to find out why she had torn out those pages she asked Lena not to press for the reason, because she was far too ashamed to think of what she had written to want to talk about it. As soon as I realized that Judith's ill will against me was only momentary and superficial and that all traces of it were completely obliterated, I was myself again.

---

The other matter that helped to put me back into sorts again was the fact that the sermon on the Sabbath was successful despite my having spent very little time upon it. It brought back some of the confidence to me which oozed out as a result of the fiasco on Wednesday night.

---

The sessions this year at the Institute on Sunday afternoons give me a great deal of joy. First the two periods in religion with the graduating class and the period in Midrash with the post-graduate group. The latter group consisting of post-graduates can be held together only so long as they feel they are profiting by the course. Not only has the attendance of this group been very good so far, but they begged me to give them an additional period. This request was music to my ears.

---

I forgot to mention that the weekly meetings held at the houses of different members of the SAJ were resumed last week. The one last week was held at the house of Mr. Harris. There were about eight people - men and women - who listened to my presentation of the purposes of the SAJ and who might become members. That too helped a little to knock out the blues.

---

This afternoon Benderly had a long talk with me about the SAJ. Taking up my remark to him last week that I was not altogether satisfied

...the importance of my...  
...in Jewish work and who could  
...of actually advancing  
...the present lay members...  
...as I shall confine myself  
...society limited to the...  
...as well as the salvation of  
...about me a group of earnest...

...information I made to him last...  
...to be known as the...  
...once identify me as...  
...Jewish life, whereas my...

...of his objections against...  
...his argument as to the...  
...But could not...

...I...  
...and that it might be possible  
...Follower: ...of the  
...all those who would be  
...to be...  
...and even be...  
...of individuals  
...would be a...  
...on one side and of the...  
...of liberal...

...up of... would be to  
...and is... as editors  
...that... published by...



with the progress of the SAJ he emphasized the importance of my gathering about myself men who are presently engaged in Jewish work and who could help me carry out the purpose of SAJ, which is that of actually advancing the cause of Judaism. It is futile to expect the present lay membership to help me carry out that purpose. So long as I shall confine my activity to these laymen, I am bound to keep the Society limited to the dimensions of an ordinary congregation. My salvation as well as the salvation of the Society lay, according to him, in getting about me a group of earnest collaborators on the spiritual side.

He also found fault with the intimation I made to him last week in regard to a publication which I would like to be known as the Jewish Modernist. He felt that such a name would at once identify me as interested only in the theological aspect of Jewish life, whereas my interests were in reality much broader.

At first I merely felt the force of his objections against the name the Jewish Modernist, and the validity of his argument as to the need of my getting about me spiritual collaborators. But I could not picture to myself a group of that kind dovetailing with the lay membership of the SAJ until it flashed upon my mind that it might be possible to work out the relationship in some such way as follows: Instead of the Society having only me as their official leader, all those who would be willing and qualified to collaborate with me might be officially recognized as leaders of the SAJ and their names would even be printed upon the stationery together with mine. At present no names of individuals appear. But in case the plan works out, it would be most advisable to have the names of the trustees on one side and of the leaders on the other side upon every letterhead and piece of literature.

The initial function of this group of leaders would be to constitute themselves as a speakers' bureau, and later to act as editors of and literary contributors to a periodical that would be published by







the SAJ.

The prospect of such an unlooked for development of the SAJ filled me with joy.

Another factor that contributed to my present peace of mind, a factor that should have been mentioned before, was the meeting of the group of students of the Senior class in the Seminary that took place last night at my home. This was the second meeting held of a group of Seminary students for the purpose of taking up the psychological study first of religion in general and then of Judaism. I used to have a group of that kind in previous years. The last two years I did no outside work of that kind with the students. The result was that the intimacy that I enjoyed with some of the former students began gradually to disappear. I felt the loss of it keenly, and, therefore, reinstated these extracurricular sessions with them. I was pleasantly surprised at the sincerity and open mindedness of all of the men who are taking this work with me. But especially was I struck by the hunger for real piety and Hasiduth, which some of them avowed. I was only too glad to second their desire for more spirituality as an incidental if not primary aim of our seminars. So far this hunger has had to satisfy itself with the singing of Hebrew and Yiddish songs of a Hassidic type.

Dec 10, 1922

This evening I attended a Seminary dinner participated in by trustees, faculty and students of the Seminary. As a rule these affairs bore me. I was ver reluctant to go tonight so as not to have to see Davidson and Marx who not only witnessed my discomfiture last Wednesday night, but even may have contributed toward it. Lena however insisted upon our going, and I am glad I went. Among the speeches delivered were those of Dr. Finkelstein whose star is in the ascendant just now - a fact that I would gladly welcome were it not for his taking a reactionary stand against an honest intellectual approach to the problems underlying

...insisted that only

...could prevent such a...

...the most important...

...a contented...

...most if not all...

...to show how...

...of Jewish life...

...of prophetic vision...

...of the...

...the results...

...I enjoyed with some of the former students...

...I told the law...

...to see me this evening...

...reference to a group of...

...at the university and even members of...

...I told him...

...to meet these girls...

...I expected about fifty...

...which he intended to...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...

...I told him...



Jewish belief and practice. I see in him a useful recruit to the forces of Jewish Jesuitism. In his remarks tonight he insisted that only Orthodox Judaism ~~plus~~ plus modern Americanism could prevent such disintegration of Jewish life as rendered possible the unspeakable crime that took place in the Bronx, the Becker murder.

What Marshall said contradicted Finkelstein's contention but the ~~contradiction~~ contradiction I am sure escaped most if not at all present. Marshall read from the life of David Lubin to show how a Jew who was an Am-Haarez judged by the traditional standards of Jewish life succeeded in raising himself to the heights of prophetic vision. Apparently one can be a decent man without Orthodox Judaism of the Ginzberg-Finkelstein type.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, December 12, 1922

Prof. Richard Gottheil of Columbia came to see me this evening. His visit, which was a very short one, was in reference to a group of Jewish girls in Barnard who have asked him to ~~ask~~ help them find some one who might guide them in their efforts to acquaint themselves with Jewish history and religion. He told me how he came to meet these girls. He had been invited by them to deliver an address. Expecting about fifty or sixty, he wrote an essay on the "Wandering Jew" which he intended to read to them. When he came he found only about ten. He put aside his prepared address and engaged them in a conversation, to get at the root of their failure to interest more Jewish girls in their work. They pointed out to him that the prevailing sentiment among the girls was entirely opposed to anything that might augment their Jewish consciousness. ~~But~~ A few years ago an attempt was made to establish a Menorah Society there; it failed as much on account of the opposition it incurred on the part of Jewish girls as on account of the opposition it called forth from the authorities. Last year there were only five Jewish girls

will to speak to them.

single one of these  
girls coming from  
anything Jewish

Lack of all sympathy

with professors

Jewish students

who said to him

Jew. Simkowitz

met a brother of

him. This was

of anthropology

and, well, he

he like

to go to

he was

of questions

the Teacher

burning question

to go with

the

the first

the

the

the



in the Jewish club that had invited Gottheil to speak to them. This year their number amounts to ten. Not a single one of these comes from German Jewish parentage. Without exception girls coming from German Jewish homes want to have nothing to do with anything Jewish in any of the colleges.

Gottheil complained of the absolute lack of all sympathy and cooperation on the part of the five or six Jewish professors of Columbia, in his efforts to do some Jewish work with the Jewish students in that university. He mentioned Jacoby the astronomer who said to him that not even his son knows that he (Prof. Jacoby) is a Jew. Simkhovitch was taken as a Gentile by Gottheil/<sup>until</sup>~~when~~ the latter met a brother of Simkhovitch in Cologne whom he found to be an ardent Zionist. Boas would not hear of anything that lay outside of his field of anthropology. Seligman when interrogated as to his willingness to cooperate, would reply that he had nothing to do with Judaism, and so down the line.

With such decided and powerful opposition to the fostering of the Jewish consciousness what prospect is there of keeping that consciousness alive?

Only last night I had to answer a number of questions put to me by the students of the Extension Classes of the Teachers Institute. In everything that they asked was implied the one burning question "Why be a Jew? Is it not enough to be an American!"

\* \* \*

Sunday, December 24, 1922

Again something new! About two weeks ago I discussed with Benderly the plan of issuing a monthly that was to be known as the Jewish Modernist. In the course of the discussion I naturally voiced the feeling which the work I do often engenders in me - the feeling of one that is trying to warm the street. In a few days after our conversation he came back with the suggestion that I gather a group of men who are engaged in

the outcome of their

very, he thought, I

relating to my house

Mr. Governor

the, the

to with me was

of our collection

the House felt by

themselves as

the thing with

then used

the two on

Prof.

of German

to be that

the value

the last

on the

the collection in

we were

to

of

ought to



Jewish work and who are also troubled about the outcome of their efforts. Much good might result from our getting together, he thought. I acted upon his advice. Accordingly I invited the following to my house last night - Dr. Benderly, Mr. Sackler, Secy of the ZOA, Dr. Covalnick of "The Day", Dr. Dushkin, Dr. Drachsler, Mr. Israel Knovitz, Rabbi Max Kadushin, Mr. Idelson and Mr. Elisha Friedman.

The consensus was that we ought to proceed with the work of integrating our group intellectually until as a result of our collective thinking we would be in a position to make our influence felt by means of a Speakers Bureau into which we might constitute ourselves, or a publication of some kind.

I was about to read a paper at the next meeting which will take place at my house next Saturday night.

The meeting began 8:30 and adjourned 12:15.

\* \* \* \*

Wednesday, February 7, 1923

Things have been humming of late. That is why I have not had time to make any entries. The discussion group has been meeting every other Saturday night. We have had three meetings since the one on Dec. 23rd. The group has been augmented through the addition of Prof. Goldfarb (of City College), Charles <sup>W</sup>Corven, Miss Evelyn Garfiel and Henry Hurwitz. These meetings have given me the opportunity to crystalize some of my thoughts on the problem of revaluation of Jewish values. The three papers which I wrote are so much to the good. At the last meeting which took place Sat. night, Feb. 3, I read the paper on the method of Revaluing the Jewish God Idea. Dr. Co<sup>W</sup>valnick who is a conceptualist in his method of thinking, gave his view of the attitude we Jews ought to take on the God idea. His hypothesis was that we Jews had nothing to contribute in the field of ethics but possessed a unique conception of the oneness of reality, which conception we Jews ought to insist upon as





necessary to individual salvation. At the end of the discussion we were very much up in the air as to the next step we should take. I am very much afraid that we got into a blind alley. The next meeting will determine whether there is anything further for us to do.

---

The SAJ has been waking up of late. A members' meeting took place on Sunday, Jan. 14, 1923. In order to get the members to come the trustees had to give a dinner which cost them \$500. After the dinner we got down to the business of the Society. When my turn came I told them that the SAJ had not yet been born. It was only in its chrysalis stage. What I said displeased H.L. Simmons a good deal, but it had the effect of arousing the members to a realization that the SAJ had not been functioning. I urged strongly the plan that the society meet at least once a month and that these meetings be devoted in part to the discussion of some social problem and in part to the business of the organization. In fact the SAJ ought to take on a character similar to that of the fraternal orders, except that the purpose would be deliberately ethical instead of in the nature of financial benefits or insurance. The result of the meeting was that a literary committee was appointed to work out a program for the next meeting of the members which was to take place within a month.

The literary committee met and decided that the subject be the play "Merchant of Venice" which Belasco is producing at the present time with Warfield as Sylock.

The members' meeting took place last Sunday, February 4. It was the most successful the SAJ has had since its inception. Whether that enthusiasm will last is another question.

---





Feb 7, 1923

- 154 -

A student of the Seminary by the name of Herbert Parzen came to see me today. He was very unhappy because he was not getting at the Seminary what he felt he needed to prepare him for the ministry -- a spiritual outlook and spiritual enthusiasm. He ~~km~~ visited the classes of the Institute of Religion and could not help noting the contrast. He asked my advice whether he should join the Institute next fall. Of course I would not think of giving such advice inasmuch as I do not know what the future of that institution is going to be and the direction it is going to take.

Mrs. Lindheim came to see me last Monday (Feb. 5) and urged me again to ally myself with Wise. Apparently she came at Wise's suggestion. I put her off with all kinds of slim excuses.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, February 21, 1923

Last Saturday night (Feb. 17) the discussion group consisting of those who had been meeting fortnightly since December took steps to engage in work of a more practical character than merely discussing paper. I suggested that we devote ourselves to the task of issuing a periodical which shall have as its purpose the setting of Jewish thought in motion. The suggestion was received favorably. A committee was appointed consisting of Dr. Coralnick, Mr. Sackler and myself to work out a list of topics and to report on the details of publication at the next meeting. Those present assented to having the name of the SAJ appear as the publisher of the periodical. I expect to get funds at least for the first year from Sam Lubell and a few others among my friends at the SAJ.

That same evening we organized ourselves formally as a Society. I made the suggestion that we call ourselves "Jabveh." The suggestion will be acted on at the next meeting.

---





On Sunday night the second of the members' meetings of the SAJ took place. As I had expected, the crowd was not as large as in Feb. 4. So long, however, as I can account for it by the large number of people that are ill, out of town and the considerable number of other affairs that went on that same evening, I refrain from drawing conclusions.

The meeting was devoted to the discussion whether we should take action on the resolution that had been adopted at the previous meeting as to the inadvisability of the Merchant of Venice being given at this time. It was decided that we take no further action on the matter.

The next topic for discussion was the repeal of the Lusk Bills. I thought at first that there would be unanimity on the urgency of repealing the Bills because of their unqualifiedly mischievous character. It developed however that there were some who advocated their staying on the Statute books. The discussion will therefore be resumed at the next members' meeting.

---

Last night I attended a wedding of a son of Polstein, one of the members of the SAJ. The bride was a daughter of a Mr. Tausend, a citizen of Mt. Vernon and a Jew of Dr. Gorfinkle's temple. I officiated at the ceremony together with Dr. Gorfinkle. It looked like an inter-marriage between Russian and German Jews, with the Russian element deeming itself the more fortunate of the two in being able to rise socially.

I happened to be seated at the ~~same~~ same table with some typical specimens of Temple Jews. Near me sat Mr. Herman Levy, a German Jew who has made a fortune in the ribbon business. He has nine factories scattered in different ~~part~~ cities of Pennsylvania. He is a short, rather thick set man with healthy complexion, rather dark, with long beetling eyebrows overhanging, a pair of clear brown eyes. His wife is an immense woman with a rather melancholy face. She had been suffering from melancholia for a good long while. This was the first time she





had been out to an affair in a year and a half. They have four daughters and one son, all married and well fixed. About thirty years ago, when they were married Mr. Levy could not afford to buy a dress suit for the wedding. He had to content himself with getting a cut-away which he could also use on Sundays though all of his men guests ~~were~~ wore dress suits.

The Levys belong to Rodeph Sholom Temple where Dr. Grossman is rabbi. Mrs. Levy is profoundly religious. She never misses a service, comes the first and leaves the last. My reciting of the benedictions in Hebrew put new life into her. Mr. Levy attends Temple on High Holidays and on Passover when it falls on Sunday. Friday night he recited Kiddush. He at first called it Kaddish, but immediately corrected himself.

In explaining to him what the SAJ stands for I said that one of its purposes, I hope, will be to combat not antisemitism from without but antisemitism from within. I told him that I learned that many Jewish employers of labor refuse to engage Jewish help. Such a condition has no right to be tolerated among Jews. I ~~no~~ sooner made those remarks than I noticed that he felt embarrassed and his wife added, "I told you that it was wrong to dismiss Jewish workingmen." He at once began explaining that in his office ninety percent of his clerks are Jews, but in his factories he cannot get along with Jewish workingmen because they are troublemakers. And turning to his wife he added, "And at home don't we have two Jews and two gentiles as help?"

Mrs. Levy happened to drop the remark to her husband that she wants to give \$25 charity (sic!) in gratefulness for her having been able to come to the wedding. Overhearing her remark I told her of the urgent case of Sam Grossman for whose family I am trying to raise some money. She promised to send me \$50. For the time being I almost forgave her husband for being a hard exploiter of labor, but the next moment I deplored all the more bitterly the cruel maladjustments in our social



order, especially when I heard from him that as soon as he would find the demands of the workingmen exorbitant, he would move his business to another city where he would find labor ready to accept his conditions. What an unequal struggle between labor and capital!

---

Tonight I went out "schnorring" with Dr. Benderly for the \$100,000 fund which is to yield him a livelihood. I went to see Golde and Buegeleisen both members of the SAJ. They both received us nicely listened to our story but refused to commit themselves, though they promised to do something.

\* \* \* \*

Friday, March 30, 1923

The SAJ has made considerable progress during the last three months. By the beginning of the year I felt that the society was not making sufficient headway. The five or six home meetings at the houses of members were socially successful but they did not bring in results commensurate with the time and effort spent on them. I urged the Board of Trustees to call together a members' meeting. At the meeting which took place on Jan. 14 I said some hard words about the Society ~~for~~ not having been born yet, but still being in the chrysalis stage. In addition I suggested the holding of membership meetings at least every five or six weeks and devoting part of the meeting to the discussion of some problem of public or individual interest. A program committee was appointed to plan these meetings. The first such meeting took place on Sunday, Feb. 18. The subject for discussion was the play "Merchant of Venice" with Warfield as Shylock. The question was whether this was an opportune time to present a play that was likely to arouse Jew hatred. The meeting was well attended and indicated the possibility of developing the discussion method as a means of getting our members to think ethically.





(I happened to look back four or five pages and I found that I was repeating myself.)

The real big event of the SAJ this year was the anniversary dinner which took place on Sunday, March 11 at the Hotel Astor. There were about four hundred and thirty guests. The literature was well gotten up, the banquet was excellently managed, the speeches were few and short, my address hit the nail on the head and everybody had a good time. It was a flawless celebration with not a single jarring note.

March 30, 1923

Of late my mind has again been agitated by the problem as to whether I have morally and spiritually a right to continue teaching at the Seminary, or whether I ought to associate myself with Wise's Jewish Institute of Religion. Dr. Wise wrote to me again a few weeks ago asking me to give a course at his summer school on the psychology of religion. I refused on the ground that my colleagues on the faculty would consider my acceptance an act of disloyalty to the Seminary. In fact, I had asked Dr. Adler whether I should accept the invitation and he answered in the negative.

Some of Wise's friends approached me and urged me strongly to throw in my lot with his institution. Dr. George Kohut, Mrs. Lindheim and Chas. Cowen. I have not had the courage either to say yes or no.

In the meantime I learned that some statements in the booklet published by the SAJ on the occasion of its anniversary have called forth unfavorable criticism. Wanting to test out my strength at the Seminary I gave Prof. Davidson a copy last Tuesday and at the same time had a long talk with him about the attitude of the Seminary toward the freedom with which I discuss traditional beliefs. At first he could not see why I invited all this criticism upon myself. When I explained how impossible it was for me to evade the problem of higher criticism in teaching the men what to preach, he seemed to be convinced. I also appeared to ex-

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000

1000000000



plain to his satisfaction why I organized the SAJ after I severed connection with the Center, instead of retiring to study and writing. At the end of the conversation we arrived at the conclusion that I should have been more intimate with the members of the faculty and have discussed these problems in an informal way.

That same evening (Tuesday, March 26) I went to see Prof. Ginzberg on the same subject. Under the guise of friendship I could see that he was laying a trap for me. He tried to impress me with his sophistries which I punctured as soon as he uttered them. He tried to show me that the Seminary permitted the critical method only in the study of the Talmud, but not in that of the Bible. I replied that the curriculum included modern commentaries in the teaching of the Bible. He then turned to the booklet (SAJ) which I had brought along and began to find fault with the statement on the very first page that Judaism was a civilization. It made no mention of religion or theology. That was enough to condemn it.

Ginzberg was not satisfied with informal discussion of my problem. He advised that I ask Dr. Adler to call one or more meetings for the purpose of discussing the question as to the attitude of the Seminary toward free expression of opinion on matters affecting traditional belief. Next day I received a letter from him suggesting that I should send a copy of the booklet to every member of the faculty, so that they might discuss the subject intelligently. I imagine that he is preparing to bring heresy charges against me.

In the meantime I received a letter from Mrs. May Fels saying that she found my booklet "satisfying beyond words" and asking me to call her up. She wanted to see me and talk to me. Knowing her association with Dr. Wise's activities, I surmised what she wanted to see me about.



Yesterday I received the letter and today (early this morning) I saw her. I was amazed to find her so worldly wise. At one time I was thrown off my scent. She seemed to approve of my remaining with the Seminary where after all I was in a position to influence about three hundred students -- an arguemtn I have been advancing in defense of my wavering. But immediately she reverted to the original strain that what I needed was untrammelled freedom that would enable me to be myself fully. She thought there was so much to me that I repressed. In my heart I wished it were true. I really feel that if I were confident of making good I would not hesitate one moment about taking the step which I have been contemplating so long.

An interesting episode took place while I was at her home. The telephone rang. Mrs. Fels spoke so loud I could not help hearing. She explained to me when she was through that Col. House called her up to ask her about Lipsky who was waiting to get an interview with him in order to persuade Lord Robert Cecil who is now visiting this country to address a Zionist meeting. She explained that she belonged to the Brandeis group who had stepped out of the Zionist organization because they did not like the way the organization conducted its affairs. She also added that Stephen Wise had cabled to Lord Robert and had asked him here to address the Free Synagogue Congregation. When Col. House learned that she was not associated with the Zionist organization, he put down the telephone quite abruptly. What that means I do not know.

This leads me to the Weitzmann topic. Dr. Weitzmann is here a second time in behalf of the Keren Hayesod. I have drifted into helping the K.H. because as far as I can see, it is the only endeavor of any account that is helping Palestine. At the banquet given to him on March 13 Emanuel Neuman of the K.H. office asked me to make the appeal. When I got there I learned that the other rabbis - Meyer Berlin, Rabbi Levinthal (the father of Israel) and others would have insisted upon





Vol 3

(I happened to look back four or five pages and I found that I was repeating myself.)

The real big event of the SAJ this year was the anniversary dinner which took place on Sunday, March 11 at the Hotel Astor. There were about four hundred and thirty guests. The literature was well gotten up, the banquet was excellently managed, the speeches were few and short, my address hit the nail on the head and everybody had a good time. It was a flawless celebration with not a single jarring note.

430 people  
at S.D.S.  
dinner.  
larger than  
sem graduation  
J.I.R.

Of late my mind has again been agitated by the problem as to whether I have morally and spiritually a right to continue teaching at the Seminary, or whether I ought to associate myself with Wise's Jewish Institute of Religion. Dr. Wise wrote to me again a few weeks ago asking me to give a course at his summer school on the psychology of religion. I refused on the ground that my colleagues on the faculty would consider my acceptance an act of disloyalty to the Seminary. In fact, I had asked Dr. Adler whether I should accept the invitation and he answered in the negative.

Some of Wise's friends approached me and urged me strongly to throw in my lot with his institution. Dr. George Kohut, Mrs. Lindheim and Chas. Cowen. I have not had the courage either to say yes or no.

In the meantime I learned that some statements in the booklet published by the SAJ on the occasion of its anniversary have called forth unfavorable criticism. Wanting to test out my strength at the Seminary I gave Prof. Davidson a copy last Tuesday and at the same time had a long talk with him about the attitude of the Seminary toward the freedom with which I discuss traditional beliefs. At first he could not see why I invited all this criticism upon myself. When I explained how impossible it was for me to evade the problem of higher criticism in teaching the men what to preach, he seemed to be convinced. I also appeared to ex-

S.D.S. booklet  
brings criticism





plain to his satisfaction why I organized the SAJ after I severed connection with the Center, instead of retiring to study and writing. At the end of the conversation we arrived at the conclusion that I should have been more intimate with the members of the faculty and have discussed these problems in an informal way.

That same evening (Tuesday, March 26) I went to see Prof.

Ginzberg on the same subject. Under the guise of friendship I could see that he was laying a trap for me. He tried to impress me with his sophistries which I punctured as soon as he uttered them. He tried to show me that the Seminary permitted the critical method only in the study of the Talmud, but not in that of the Bible. I replied that the curriculum included modern commentaries in the teaching of the Bible. He then turned to the booklet (SAJ) which I had brought along and began to find fault with the statement on the very first page that Judaism was a civilization. It made no mention of religion or theology. That was enough to condemn it.

Ginzberg was not satisfied with informal discussion of my problem. He advised that I ask Dr. Adler to call one or more meetings for the purpose of discussing the question as to the attitude of the Seminary toward free expression of opinion on matters affecting traditional belief. Next day I received a letter from him suggesting that I should send a copy of the booklet to every member of the faculty, so that they might discuss the subject intelligently. I imagine that he is preparing to bring heresy charges against me.

In the meantime I received a letter from Mrs. May Fels saying that she found my booklet "satisfying beyond words" and asking me to call her up. She wanted to see me and talk to me. Knowing her association with Dr. Wise's activities, I surmised what she wanted to see me about.

Bring critical  
of Kap  
booklet  
of idea of  
Judaism as a  
civilization  
Bring suggests  
Kap booklet  
to all Sem  
go  
fac.



*Insanity*

Yesterday I received the letter and today (early this morning) I saw her. I was amazed to find her so worldly wise. At one time I was thrown off my scent. She seemed to approve of my remaining with the Seminary where after all I was in a position to influence about three hundred students -- an arguemtn I have been advancing in defense of my wavering. But immediately she reverted to the original strain that what I needed was untrammled freedom that would enable me to be myself fully. She thought there was so much to me that I repressed. In my heart I wished it were true. [I really feel that if I were confident of making good I would not hesitate one moment about taking the step which I have been contemplating so long.]

An interesting episode took place while I was at her home. The telephone rang. Mrs. Fels spoke so loud I could not help hearing. She explained to me when she was through that Col. House called her up to ask her about Lipsky who was waiting to get an interview with him in order to persuade Lord Robert Cecil who is now visiting this country to address a Zionist meeting. She explained that she belonged to the Brandeis group who had stepped out of the Zionist organization because they did not like the way the organization conducted its affairs. She also added that Stephen Wise had cabled to Lord Robert and had asked him here to address the Free Synagogue Congregation. When Col. House learned that she was not associated with the Zionist organization, he put down the telephone quite abruptly. What that means I do not know.

This leads me to the Weitzmann topic. Dr. Weitzmann is here a second time in behalf of the Keren <sup>Mayesod</sup>. I have drifted into helping the K.H. because as far as I can see, it is the only endeavor of any account that is helping Palestine. At the banquet given to him on March 13 Emanuel Neuman of the K.H. office asked me to make the appeal. When I got there I learned that the other rabbis - Meyer Berlin, Rabbi Levinthal (the father of Israel) and others would have insisted upon





being given an opportunity to speak if I were to make the appeal. Fearing that the multitude of addresses might hurt the cause I waived my privilege. Weitzmann greeted me very cordially when he caught sight of me at first and then when I went up to him after the banquet.

I went to see him twice, once at his invitation and a second time to extend to him the invitation of the SAJ to be its guest of honor at a banquet to be given to him some time in May.

The Saturday night group which has assumed the name Jabneh is continuing to meet regularly. We have decided to issue a Jewish monthly. So far I do not see that we are ready to undertake such a publication. I have been the only one to write papers for the group. I have already read four.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, May 29, 1923

The SAJ has made considerable headway the last few months. The membership is approaching the 100 mark, and I have succeeded in working up a great deal of spirit. Some one described it as the only Jewish organization of a religious character that had college spirit.

Dr. Weitzmann is here a second time to get funds for the Keren Hayesod. I felt it my duty to get the SAJ to contribute a sum large enough to justify the claim that it is dedicated to the restoration of Israel's ancient land. At first I was going to have the Society tender W. a banquet in the hope that this would lead to the members' taking part in the campaign. It developed, however, that it would be much better to have the Society take the initiative in interesting the various congregations of the West Side in the effort to collect funds for Palestine. After two or three conferences of members from the various congregations with Weitzmann, an inter-congregation Keren Hayesod Committee was organized with a view of raising \$100,000 by May 13 at which time a reception would be given to W. At that reception no funds were to be collected.

*Cordial  
relations w/  
Weitzmann*

*Kap. helps  
Org. Committee  
to collect  
\$100,000 for  
P.K. 14*





The SAJ took a leading part in the campaign. It obligated itself to a quota of \$25,000. Harry Simmons took the chairmanship. Abe Liebovitz was treasurer, and Nathan Turrell headed the banquet committee. Lang, our executive director, issued several copies of a bulletin to all the members of the six or seven congregations represented in the campaign. The only congregation that made a serious attempt to raise funds was the Bnai Jeshurun of W. 88 St. headed by Rabbi I. Goldstein. So far the SAJ raised about \$20,000 and the B'nai Jeshurun Congr. about \$16,000.

May 29, 1923

Last Sabuoth night (Sunday May 20) we had a very successful Program meeting. After the services we had the conventional Shabuoth cheese pancakes. With the collation over the meeting began at 9:30. Six of the members delivered short talks on different phases of the SAJ platform set forth in the blue booklet which had been given out as a souvenir at the anniversary gathering on March 11.

Of course the addresses were in most instances wide of the mark but considering they were given by laymen who have had little experience in thinking out any abstract idea they were tolerable. To the people themselves these addresses were huge achievements. If the evening had the effect of giving the people a greater degree of confidence in their ability to discuss abstract problems, it had the desired effect, as far as I am concerned.

The interest of that meeting was enhanced through the presence of Dr. Weitzmann, whom I had invited to come. He had supper at my house before we went to Maariv service. In the course of the conversation at the house, he explained to me what the chief issue at the coming Zionist Congress would be, and intimated to me that I ought to attend the congress as a delegate in order to help bring about the organization of the Jewish Agency on the lines suggested by him and approved by me at the time.

Weitzmann  
eats at  
Kaplan's



At the meeting W. was called upon to speak. He expressed keen satisfaction at the attempt that we were making to adjust Judaism to modern life. He called us a society of searchers. Taking up the point that Judaism is a civilization and not merely a religion, he developed Renan's conception of the reason for the unique character of the Jewish civilization.

At the end of the meeting he was elected an honorary member of our organization.

(Mother Rubin, however, complained to Lena that it was wrong of W. to make notes in writing on Yom Tov night.)

On Monday, May 14 the Trustees of the SAJ met at Simmons' house. I brought up the suggestion that during the coming year we reorganize our service in conformity with the platform of our Society. After a lengthy discussion in which Levy said that it was too soon and Winer said that I was already too late to make changes, I carried my point and I was authorized to work out a plan incorporating the various changes I suggested.

Without even waiting for the complete reorganization of the services, I had the Cantor, Mr. Idelson omit completely from the Musaph service all allusion to the sacrificial cult. This was marked and noticeable improvement on what I had the cantor do hitherto, viz., to change the text of the liturgy dealing with the sacrificial cult from one of petition to one of historical remembrance. Thus instead of saying *prayerfully* I had him say *gladly*. On the first day of Shabuoth I asked him to omit that part altogether. I asked them to recited the Amida word by word with the Cantor. Moreover, the service was much more impressive than it had ever been when the people mumbled it to themselves.

W. was honorary member of S.A.J.

changes ref. to sacrificial cult to past tense.





I organized a committee to take charge of the SAJ Bulletin and to change it into a Review. The purpose of this Review should be to encourage the members to read think and write. It is therefore to consist mainly of articles to be contributed by the members themselves. I got Arthur Rubin to become the editor.

There was much enthusiasm expressed at a meeting of the Program Committee in behalf of a correspondence course in Hebrew for the members.

Today I examined Abraham Burstein of the graduating class of the Seminary. He is a candidate for graduation. I was ashamed of myself for giving my consent to the graduation of a man who showed such comprehensive ignorance of the most elementary knowledge of Bible and Hebrew. He happened to let slip the verse *מאיפה בא המדבר הזה* "Where does it occur?" I asked him. "In Job." "Guess again." "Oh yes, it must be in Isaiah." "Where do the rabbis get the notion that there was a flood in the generation of Enoch?" "I don't know." "Do you recall the verse *אף נאכלהו* "No." When I showed it to him in the text he said " *אף* means 'cursed.'" *אף* means to cause.

Joseph Levy's older child Miriam presents a problem of serious import. She is 12 years old, physically normal and of good appearance. But her bearing and actions are repellant. She has read a good deal considering her age and has developed a Nietzschean hatred of hypocrisy, religion and morality. Richard Coeur de Lion is her ideal. She has an antipathy against Jews and Judaism. She revels in being hated. She regards enemies as an essential spur to great achievement. She admires Washington because he was cold, haughty and uncompanionable and she thinks little of Lincoln because he was sympathetic. Is this genius or perversity?





Nothing has come so far of the Jabneh group. The three other papers that were read besides my own were Draxler's, Emanuel Gamoran's and Max Kadushin's. To my regret I had to act the teacher and to show up the superficiality of their respective papers. Draxler spoke of Jewish survival without stating definitely what particular thing he was interested in tracing the survival of, whether of the culture, the people or the ideas. Gamoran gave an excerpt of his doctor's dissertation in which he attempted to set forth the criteria of the Jewish curriculum. Upon my questioning him closely it turned out that his criteria helped to identify the reasons why Jewish education was a problem but were not criteria in solving that problem. Kadushin was supposed to give us an account of the development of the synagogue, and he said a good deal about the subject without making clear what he understood by a synagogue. At one time it was the ritual, at another time the house in which Jews gathered, and then again it was but a synonym for Judaism.

It is too bad that it is so difficult to get any one to think straight and honestly on the problem of Judaism. How poor<sup>wg</sup>/are in the things of the spirit!

\* \* \* \*

Sunday, June 24, 1923

I am writing this in Room 436 of the S.S. George Washington on the way to Europe.

This opportunity to go to Europe presented itself to me through the close contact with Weitzmann into which the SAJ, or rather some of its leaders, like H.L. Simmons, Turrell and Liebovitz were thrown by reason of their Keren Hayesod activity. Weitzmann mentioned to them that he would want me to be one of the American delegates at the Carlsbad Congress which is to take place on Aug. 6. They readily took up his suggestion and urged me to accept the invitation to go to Europe. They expressed their readiness to defray the cost of my trip. At first I was

Key doesn't think much of Gamoran's or Kadushin's papers at Sat night group.

Max goes to Zion's Cong at Carlsbad.



hesitant, more out of mere inertia than for any define reason. But when I received a letter from Weitzmann requesting me to be a delegate I decided to go. I reached that decision on Thursday, June 14 and telephoned my acceptance to Dr. Weitzmann on Friday, June 15.

Having made up my mind to take the trip to Europe I went to see mother and Sophie at Woonsocket. I had Lena along with me and spent the Sabbath there quietly.

On Monday I went to Baltimore to watch part of the proceedings at the Zionist convention. I had not the least intention to deliver any speeches. In fact I did not have the least idea that I would be called upon. When I arrived at the hotel I walked around meeting some of the people I had known, and getting my bearings. In the course of my explorations I heard applause. Inferring that some meeting was going on I was drawn by curiosity to find out the nature. When I came into the room it was the main auditorium where the convention was being held. I saw about fifty people, a goodly portion of whom sat on the platform, listening to a speaker in Hebrew. I realized that I was witnessing a meeting of the "Histadruth Ibrith." I sat in the back listening. When the speaker was through Brainin rose and announced that "a distinguished guest entered the room, Professor Mordchai Kaplan. Would he please step up on the platform?" I stepped up and at once my mind began working on a speech that I would be called upon to make. Ye gods! How was I to escape? Fortunately the speaker whom Brainin introduced after I came upon the platform was long winded and gave no signs of any early conclusion. I glided out without ceremony. I was not going to stake my reputation on a hasty thought out speech in Hebrew.

I had a similar experience later in the afternoon. After talking with a few of my friends in the lobby I went in to listen to Dr. Schmarya Levin delivering an address on the importance of supporting the Zionist Organization. Again some one on the platform managed

Kap called  
up to  
Platform  
at 20th  
meeting in  
Bldg.  
Indicates  
his rep.

1st

Agan





to have me hauled up to the front. Lipsky also announced the distinguished visitor. I wanted to beat a retreat but my way was blocked by Abe Goldberg and another Zionist official and I had to come to the platform. Once more the Damocles sword of a speech hung over my head. I resorted to the same flight tactics as in the morning, and I managed to come off unscathed.

I suppose if I were to utilize these opportunities to harangue I might have acquired greater popularity. But I am not so sure that I ought not to be grateful for not being able to capitalize readily on these opportunities. My inability to utter glittering platitudes keeps me in wholesome obscurity.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, June 26, 1923

While in Baltimore Laurence Crohn came to see me. The Crohn family were among the most prominent members of the 85 Street Congregation where I held my first rabbinic position. Mrs. Crohn was the daughter of Alba Baum the founder of that congregation about fifty years ago when Yorkville was sparsely inhabited and the number of Jews there was very small. I never met Alba Braun. He died about 1900 a year or two before I became the minister of Kehilath Jeshurun. From what I heard about him he seems to have been quite a remarkable man. He was a Russian Jew, possessed of a great deal of common sense, honest, high minded and of a cheerful disposition. He was no "Lamdan," which is probably the reason for his having retained all these native qualities of the Jew that is unspoiled by Talmudic sophistry. I may be wrong in blaming the Talmud for the perversion of Jewish character. As a matter of fact there are plenty of Am-haaratzim who lack all ethical sense. The Travis family of Tulsa is a case in point. They are strict observers of every tittle of Jewish ceremony, totally ignorant of Jewish lore, and at the same time devoid of the ethical spirit. Nevertheless even that family does not





prove an exception to what seems to be on the whole true that Talmudism has an unethical influence. Though themselves ignorant of Talmud, they seem to pay great deference to Talmudic learning, as is apparent from the fact that they had one of their family marry a poor student - Revel - who was reputed to be an "Iliu" or Talmudic prodigy. From reports that have reached me Revel for whom his family wanted to buy the Seminary presidency, is the most unscrupulous of them all.

Abba Baum was the father of seven daughters and eight sons. He saw to it that all of his children be given a good general education. He had most of his daughters attend Normal College (now Hunter) an unusual thing for a Russian Jew to do at that time. One of his daughters, Mrs. Ruskay, was quite a prominent figure in American Jewry during the nineties when the Russian immigration began pouring in. Another is Mrs. Edward Epstein. His two sons also went to college; one became a physician the other a lawyer. Besides giving them a general education he imbued them with a religious Jewish spirit and inculcated in them the habits of Jewish observance. The result is that not only all his children are to this day intensely Jewish in their mode of life, but that many of his grandchildren still retain their Jewishness. A goodly number, however, have turned their back upon Judaism. In the Crohn family one of the oldest sons, Burril, who is a physician, in his younger days revolted against Jewish ceremonials and began exercising a baleful influence upon the other members of the family.

It was at that time that I left the 85 St. congregation and became principal of the Teachers Institute. Two of the Crohn family joined the Institute, Naomi Crohn and her brother Lawrence. The presentation of the ~~pragmatic~~ pragmatic point of view in Judaism enabled Naomi and Lawrence to withstand the virus of religious indifference that their brother Burril had been trying to inject into them. They in turn influenced some of their sisters to be more Jewish in their sympathies,

Revel  
married  
Baum's  
sister



and to take up Zionist and other Jewish work.

Laurence was not graduated from the Institute, but the two years that he attended its courses have left a lasting impression upon him. He went into farming for a time and learned the fertilizing business. He has married and settled down in Baltimore. When he came to New York a few months ago I told him about the SAJ. The possibility of developing such a group in Baltimore presented itself to his mind. When I saw him in Baltimore during the Zionist convention he reported that he had discussed the organization of the SAJ with a number of his friends and that in all likelihood an SAJ group would be formed after the summer with about fifteen or twenty members as a nucleus. I urged him to go on with the work of organization and I volunteered to come to speak to the group once a month until they found a leader.

---

At Baltimore I met some of the graduates of the Seminary. Every one of them was towing some influential member of his respective congregation. I did not discern in any of them any mental or spiritual growth. They impressed me as more or less successful job holders. GraeZZel, Salit, Fredman, Mortimer Cohen and one or two more.

Fredman who is rabbi in Philadelphia, told me of an interesting experience. His synagogue was originally built by someone as a memorial to his wife. The one that built the synagogue lost his second wife. He hadded a new wing to the synagogue in her memory, too. Not content with memorializing his two wives/<sup>in</sup>this manner, he had statues made of them and placed those statues in the court of the synagogue building. Fredman got Prof. Ginzberg's opinion that statuary was prohibited within synagogue precincts and took steps to persuade the donor to have them removed. In reply the donor closed the new building that he had put up and would not permit the congregation to take possession of it. Although seventy odd years old, he also threatened to turn radical reform





and to repudiate all his interest in and support of conservative Judaism. After a while he relented and allowed the congregation to have its way. I am not sure of his name. I believe it is Rothschild. But I remember that he is a Bavarian Jew, one of the type that has played the Jewish "Wjunker" in American Jewish life.

~~Another~~ Another of the seminary graduates whom I met at Baltimore is Coblenz. The son of aloud mouthed maggid, and himself having dabbled in German philosophy and literature and possessing a strong voice, he regards himself as an oratorical genius whom the world has not yet discovered. Although radical in his conception of Judaism, his position compels him to play the part of an Orthodox rabbi. At least he has the merit of not making ~~xxxxxx~~ a virtue of his necessity and posing before those who know him as genuinely orthodox.

He is altogether too much abosrbed in himself to put any stock in what I have been attempting to do both for the theory and the practice of Judaism. He kept me up in my room in the hotel till two o'clock in the night, in order to impress upon me that I must secure from the Teachers Institute a teacher for his school at \$1800 per annum - indeed, as he said - a vast sum.

All this seems to have little to do with the Zionist ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ convention which I came to attend. But somehow I could not get my bearings among those who seemed to be interested in the doings of the convention. The feeling that the entire procedure of a convention is all pre-arranged and that the noise and the speeches are merely for display purposes, prevents me from taking those occasions seriously.

On Sat. June 2 I preached at the Far Rockaway synagogue. The invitation to preach was signed by Roggen and stated that in view of Cecil Huskay's celebrating the Bar Mizvah of his son that day they would be





pleased to have me occupy the pulpit. I accepted for various reasons, chief among which was that I wanted to make friends of the Ruskays. Another motive may have been the possibility of annexing the congregation to the SAJ movement. They are at present without a rabbi. But if I entertained any such dream it was dispelled by the first glimpse I caught of the congregation in action. I saw at once that it consisted of the second generation of Russian Jewish bourgeois. Their only modernity is the ability to speak English. Their general education hardly amounts to more than that of a public school graduate. Their knowledge of Judaism is confined to the ability to read with ease the parts of the ritual that are frequently repeated. Their attitude to observances is that of punctiliousness induced not by an intrinsic belief in their value or sacredness but out of a profound respect for their fathers who were shrewd business men in their day and prepared the way for their sons' prosperity. A goodly number are the sons of men whose moral and spiritual toughness I recognized while a rabbi of the 85 Street congregation.

The services were repellent to me all the more because they made a pretense of being decorous. The formalism, the spiritlessness and the lack of reverence that marked the proceedings both Friday night and Saturday morning opened my eyes to the fact that the group of people that constituted the Far Rockaway congregation would make very poor material for SAJ purposes.

The even tenor of the Seminary Faculty was interrupted for the first time in years by the announcement which appeared in the press that Dr. Hoschander was appointed to chair in Bible. No member of the faculty not even Ginzberg, had been consulted as to the appointment. It was done entirely upon Adler's suggestion and responsibility.

Marx, Davidson and Ginzberg at once began to agitate that Adler

*Sem Fac angry  
not being consulted on  
Bible  
App't*



bought to be taught a lesson not to appoint a member of the faculty without consulting the faculty. They decided that a letter be written to Adler to that effect. I took a hand in formulating the letter and was ready to sign my name to it. When Hyamson was apprised of the plan to write a letter, he suggested that we take the matter up personally with Adler at one of the faculty meetings. He was willing to act as spokesman.

Unfortunately the meeting at which the matter was to have been brought up dragged out so long that I could not wait till Hyamson would get a chance to make his interpolation. Finkelstein, however, told me afterwards what took place.

Hyamson, in a very dignified and straightforward way, pointed out to Adler that it was desirable that the faculty should be consulted whenever an important appointment was to be made. He was supported by Davidson and Marx. When Ginzberg's turn came, he broke out in an impassioned protest against Adler for failing to consult him who was regarded as the greatest authority in Jewish learning in America, if not in the whole world. (He may not have said it in these very words, but I can well believe that he conveyed the impression which these words give because I have heard him drop such a remark more than once.)

Adler replied that he had attempted several times to get the opinion of the faculty on the matter in an informal way, but was met each time with evasive replies. He also defended Horschander as being the kind of biblical scholar that the Seminary needed.

I know Horschander only by sight. I am told that he is of a pietistic turn of mind. He is a strict observer of the Mitzvot. How he reconciled that with the non-traditional view of the Torah that he holds and teaches I cannot tell. As far as his teaching ability is concerned, there seemed to be conflicting reports from the students.

Horschander  
critical





On Sunday, June 10 the graduation exercises of the Seminary took place. This time a graduate of the class of 1913 held forth. Samuel Cohen of Kansas City was the invited speaker to represent that class. His address dealt mainly with the glories of the West and South as fields for the rabbinate. There was not the least note of spiritual wrestling or difficulty. Everything was as plain as a pikestaff. On an equally low level did Rabbi Max Drobbs' address move. It was even inferior both in style and content to the one by Cohen. He went out of his way to take a fling at synagogues that developed into centers and at liberalism in general. Adler as usual said nothing though he spoke about fifteen minutes and gave voice to the annual plea for funds.

A new note was struck, both in a literal and in a figurative sense <sup>when</sup> ~~with~~ the organist, who is a gentile, played his own medley of Jewish songs most of which were modern and Zionist. I assume that Adler squirmed.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, June 27, 1923

In the evening the Alumni of the Teachers Institute held their annual gathering. The auditorium of the Seminary was well filled. ~~Tough~~ Though not as elaborate and impressive an affair as the one of the year preceding, that having been the tenth anniversary, there was nevertheless a good deal of esprit de corps displayed. The tendency to crystallize that spirit into definite action took the form of a pledge to raise \$5,000 annually toward a building fund. As soon as that sum raised would be large enough to make a good showing they would start a campaign to raise the bulk of the money needed for a building. In my remarks I encouraged them in this project though I also expressed the hope that the alumni would not neglect to work for the finer things of the spirit.

Another interesting Teachers Institute affair was the Siyum arranged by the Israel Friedlaender classes. Chipkin certainly deserves a great deal of credit for his pertinacity in building up those classes.

Chipkin  
Israel  
Friedlaender





I have very little to do with the organization of the extension classes. It is practically all Chipkin's work. He is to my mind the most Jewish, conscientious and selfless of the group that Benderly cultivated. I probably had a hand in directing the bent of Chipkin's mind, but I have certainly been reaping the benefit of his devotion to the cause of Jewish education in the form of whole hearted assistance in carrying on the extension work.

I have gotten to rely so much upon him that I do not always attend the affairs or meetings of students where my attendance is expected. It was only at the personal solicitation of two of the leading students of the Friedlaender classes that I attended the school gathering held also in the auditorium of the Seminary on Thursday night June 21. In extenuation I want to say that I expected visitors that evening on account of my leaving for Europe the next day.

I was very happy I went. I was delighted to see how successful Chipkin was in building up a school spirit. In my remarks I pointed out how the hope of a Jewish future rested with the young people who like those that attended the Friedlaender classes were willing to make sacrifices for the ideal of "Torah Lishmah."

---

Friday morning I delivered a lecture before Conference of the Jewish Teachers Association held at the SAJ House. My subject was Character training in the Religious Schools. The two main points that I brought out were a) that it was high time that the aim of Jewish education should be conceived not only from the standpoint of the Jewish group which uses the process of education to perpetuate its life and ideals but also from the standpoint of the child in whom education should have the effect of developing ethical personality and b) that ethical personality should not be consigned as the sum of such abstract traits vs. honesty, kindness, courage etc. but as the increasing sum of social relationships into which



the human being enters and to which he reacts in such a way that they make for the enhancement of life. The problem of ethical personality consists mainly in knowing in each specific social relationship what duties are most conducive to the enhancement of life.

The large number of those present, the dignity which attended the opening of the conference, the interest shown by those present both in the lecture and in the discussion that followed, afforded me a great deal of joy. The Jewish Teachers Association consists almost entirely of Teachers Institute graduates. That accounts for my rejoicing in the splendid showing they made that morning.

---

On board the steamer where I am now I have done something that may start me on a new career.

I knew that Judge Julian W. Mack was on board. Mrs. Lindheim told me when I telephoned to her last Thursday night about my leaving for Europe that Judge Mack was to be on this steamer on his way to Palestine. But I made no advances to meet him. He spied me from a distance as I was passing through the dining room, and calling me over to where he was sitting with some of his friends, he introduced me to them. They were Mr. & Mrs. Fohs and their child Ella and Mr. Benjamin Cohen.

On Monday morning he sat down next to me on deck. The conversation turned very soon to the Institute of Religion. When he asked me what my intentions were with regard to it, I replied that I had intended to discuss the matter at length with Wise and that I had been expecting to hear from him ever since he promised to set a time for such an interview. That was almost two months ago. When Mack heard this, he put the question point blank to me whether I would be ready to join the faculty of the Institute the coming fall. If I would say yes, he would radio to Wise at once. I was taken aback by the suddenness of the suggestion, and parried for time. Mack intimated that later it might

Judge Mack  
presumably  
to join  
IIR





be too late, because Wise was negotiating with some men in Europe. When I heard this I was afraid that I might lose the ~~once~~ chance I had of being emancipated from the hostile atmosphere of the Seminary. I accordingly authorized Mack to radio to Wise.

The radio included the suggestion I had made to Dr. Oberman - at present a permanent member of the Jewish Institute of Religion faculty - that the rabbinic degree be not given to the average graduate, but rather some doctor degree. My reason for this stipulation is that I consider the degree rabbi as one that should be given only to those who have both an extensive and intensive knowledge of Jewish lore. With the likelihood that many will have to be graduated from that institution, who will have but a meagre knowledge of Hebrew, I am of the opinion that the ~~rabbinic~~ ~~rabbinic~~ degree should be given only to the few who will have done sufficient post-graduate work to deserve it.

This is already Wednesday night. As yet Wise has not replied.

\* \* \*

Monday, July 16, 1923 (Karlsbad - Pupps'Haus Quisicana)

To continue where I left off. On Saturday, June 30 Mack received the following reply: "If Kaplan ready we are pleased offer him chair religious education and homiletics Blau no difficulty. May we announce Wise Frankel Bloch."

I cannot understand how a matter of such importance should be concluded without a detailed discussion of all the particulars involved. Such action appears to me to be temperamental and altogether unsuitable to my rather phlegmatic disposition. Not even Mack could see how it was possible for me to accept the position at once without first sending in my resignation to the Seminary. With all that I am willing to risk allying myself with Wise in order that I might have both freedom and intelligent environment friendly to my views and aspirations. Mack, at my suggestion, replied that announcement at present time was not to be con-





sidered, and that the negotiations could not be concluded before I would see Wise personally as soon as I got back. In the letter which I sent off to Wise next day I said that though I had refused his offer last year I was ready to enter into negotiations with him, but did not succeed in securing an interview.

What the outcome will be I cannot tell at present. In the meantime I received a cable from Lena last Saturday (July 14) apparently in reference to the letter she had received from me giving her an account of my transactions with Wise. In that cable she states: "Disapprove proposition await letter." I was under the impression that she had become reconciled to my accepting the position at the Institute of Religion but it seems that something must have transpired that caused her to change her mind.

Jena against going to J.R.

---

Judge Mack gave me a copy of the verbatim report of the Second Annual Conference of the Palestine Devpt. Council which took place toward the end of May. I was very much impressed by the fact that the discussions of that Conference were far more concrete and fruitful than those carried on at the Baltimore Convention of the American Zionist Organization. But the minute scale of the plans and activities of the P.D.C. counterbalance their practicality. Surely not by such picayune measures however efficient they be, can Palestine be made into a Jewish Homeland. The people who are interested in the P.D.C. seem to be devoid of imagination as far as the Palestine problem is concerned. On the other hand the happy-go-lucky methods of the Zionist organization can hardly be approved by any one who has a sense for realities. As far as personnel is concerned the Brandeis group no doubt contains many more able and trustworthy men than the Zionist Organization. Our forces are far too limited to make their division anything less than fatal; and there can be no question that the Brandeis-Weitzmann controversy has been the undoing of Zionism.



Tuesday, July 24, 1923

In the course of my stay here at Karlsbad I have become acquainted with a few people who are on the periphery of the circle of those I came ~~into~~ in contact with in the Jewish Center. Bornstein, father-in-law of Irving Krieger, a member of the SAJ. He has become a member of the Center because of the pressure brought upon him by Joseph H. Cohen, who at the same time made him a director of the Beth Israel Hospital. This is in line with Cohen's policy who has reduced the Center practically to an annex of the Hospital. Bornstein is a man who in his boyhood days studied some Talmud and who lends a ready ear to liberal ideas. But, not having a mind of his own on spiritual matters, simply follows the lead of habit.

Relation to  
Center  
Hospital

Kenrich, at present a member of Solomon's synagogue on 93 St. also a man who in his youth studied in a Yeshiva and likewise infected with liberal ideas. Both he and Bornstein are Polish Jews.

Barney Reich is of a different type entirely. He is a Hungarian and displays what appears to be the characteristic trait of that people. personal loyalty. Persons seem to stand with them above social welfare. His loyalty to Dr. Ph. Klein of the 116 St. congr. surpasses his interest in Judaism, and as a result he is forever harping upon the importance of giving his rabbi Dr. Klein an adequate salary.

~~Friedman~~ Friedman is also a member of the Hungarian Synagogue but with less of the trait of personal loyalty. He was active in bringing about the alliance between his congregation and the Pincus Elyah of W. 95 St.

I formed the acquaintance of a Mr. Finkelstein of Cedarhurst, who expects to move on to my neighborhood in N.Y. and become a member of the S.A.J.





Among some of my old acquaintances I met here Mrs. Isaac Polsteir with her son; Mrs. Arthur Lamport with her daughter; Mr. Mark Horowitz and his wife and daughter and Mr. Sol Lamport.

I have known Mark Horowitz ever since I have been in America. I first met him as a young man working in his father's shoe store, where I used to get my shoes when I was a child between the years of nine and twelve. The store was on the N. E. corner of Suffolk and Hester Streets. I myself lived at that time at 32 Suffolk St. Father told me that the old man H<sub>o</sub>rowitz belonged to a high-born and well-to~~o~~-do family in St. Petersburg. He considered the old man Horowitz quite a Lamdan and Maskil. I recall that father borrowed from him Maimonides Guide to the Perplexed which Horowitz kept on asking for many years afterwards. The younger Horowitz was thus brought up in an atmosphere of strict observance softened somewhat by the rather kindly humanity of his father. He married a daughter of Nathan Lamport, one of the present day typical Pharisees, a man who incarnates the worst of the Talmudic spirit. Mark Horowitz has been a minor partner of the Lamport firm which is doing millions of dollars worth of business and is largely owned and managed by S. C. Lamport. Recently S. C. Lamport made up his mind to deprive this Mark Horowitz and Sol Lamport of all say in the business. Mark Horowitz asked to be paid out. S. C., <sup>who,</sup> ~~when~~, according to Mark Horowitz, wanted to cheat him out of at least two thirds of what was owing to him. Instead of giving him six or seven hundred thousand he wanted to pay him only about 250 thousand.

A week ago Sunday Mark Horowitz came to my room at the Quisiana and gave me a detailed account of Sam's attempt to cheat him out of a vast sum. Horowitz explained that he could not ask Sam to go to court, because of the nature of the business did not permit it. I suppose that means that there are a good many shady transactions in that business which it would be dangerous to expose. The matter was referred to Semel and Roth-





stein as arbitrators. Nevertheless, Horowitz claimed Sam would have succeeded in befuddling them, if he had not managed to get - unknown to Sam - a detailed inventory of the assets and liabilities of the business. What purpose Horowitz had in taking more than three hours of my time proving to me that Sam was a downright liar and thief, as he put it, I don't know. But his tale had its effect in opening my eyes to the kind of a man whose name figures on the Board of Directors of the SAJ, a Society to promote Ethical Judaism.

---

Here I also came across my old "friend" Harry Fischel and his wife, the champion Jewish vulgarian of the U.S. He has just returned from Palestine where he was busy gathering laurels. His achievement in building a house for Chief Rabbi Kook in Jerusalem has brought him renown throughout the length and breadth of the land. His name is inscribed in flaring letters upon the house. Both the cornerstone laying and the dedication were attended with as much ceremony as the building of the Temple. At the dedication there were thirty-six speakers, including all the notables from High Commissioner Samuels down. And all for a paltry \$25,000.

Aug 17, 1923

*at Karlsbad  
was when*

I have met here Ussishkin, the head of the Zionist Executive in Palestine. When I saw him two years ago in the Brandeis-~~Weitzmann~~ controversy he impressed me as a strong characterized man, self-willed and not of the kind that knows how to make compromises. For some reason Weitzmann is apparently trying to oust him from that post of responsibility. There is probably a good deal of truth about his not being any too competent to handle the situation, though he is honest as the day.

At the suggestion of Sol Lampport and through his mediation I have transacted an important piece of business with him for the SAJ. The Hebrew monthly magazine "Hashiloach" which had been appearing for many









Friday, August 17, 1923 (On board S. S. George Washington)

I began to enjoy my stay at Karlsbad about a week before the opening of the Congress. Sol Lamport made good company and I was introduced to a few people who had come either as delegates or as visitors.

On Wednesday, Aug. 1 I took a trip to Prague together with Lamport, for the sole purpose of taking a glimpse of the Jewish antiquities there. I wrote up my impressions of Prague Jewry for the SAJ Review. ] X

Sat. Aug. 4 right after services I attended an informal caucus meeting of the American group. I noted at once that the only ones to play an important note in that group were Louis Lipsky, Abe Goldberg, Morris Rottenberg and Emanuel Newman, and that the question which would monopolize the interest of the Congress would be the one as to the formation of the Jewish Agency. Goldberg read a draught of proposals that had been drawn up by a few people who had met with Weitzmann in London. According to that draft the Jewish Agency was to be a body of fifty, 25 of whom were to be selected by the Congress, and the other 25 by a conference of delegates representing various Jewish organizations throughout the world. Each group of 25 was select five from its number to serve on the Executive Committee which was thus to consist of ten members.

So apparently simple a proposition was defended and opposed in caucus meetings and at the congress with a vehemence that indicated that it was merely a stalking horse for issues of a mere personal character. Those who opposed it were bent upon the overthrow of Weitzmann. Those who defended it were determined to remove Ussishkin from his post as Chief Executive in Palestine. The fight against Weitzmann was led by the World Mizrahi and a minority party in the Zionist Organization of Poland. When I say World Mizrahi I have in mind chiefly the contingent from Poland.

On Sunday afternoon and evening, Aug. 5 I attended a caucus meeting of delegates from the various Landmanschaften. Lipsky and

of letters  
WZC-  
regarding  
Jewish  
Agency  
controversy  
over agency  
in 1922



Goldberg the former in English the latter in Yiddish, aggued for the resolution they had brought with them from London. In my naivete I could not see the difference between what they urged now and what Brandeis had pleaded for two years ago when they attacked him bitterly and practically drove him out from the organization. They were acting like politicians in the true sense of the term as were all of those who took an active part in the deliberations (if you can call them such) of the Congress. That is, they were making use of principles to justify their support of certain men and opposition to others. Yet they were no worse than the bulk of the delegates to the Congress. There was nothing exalting or uplifting about any of its sessions. On the contrary. It was a tug of war for power. It was natural, human and ordinary. If Zionism were impelled primarily by motives such as those that actuated the things said and done at the congress, it would have no raison d'etre. If you take out experts like Ruppin, Wilkanski (agricultural expert) and others of that type the people gathered at the congress represent not the meat or the broth of the Zionist movement but the foam. No movement is without them, but its value or significance should not be judged by them.

I came to the foregoing conclusion after ~~had~~ having experienced a sense of depression as a result of what I beheld at the various plenary sessions of the congress. The Mizrahi, who represented the Right Wing and the radicals as the left acted at times like wild animals. They were ready to jump at each other's throats. The Mizrahi in order to dominate in the congress did something very kindred to the political trick of packing the meeting or stuffing the ballot box. They took advantage of the low valuta in Poland to buy with a few hundred dollars which they got from America a vast number of Shekels which entitled them to about forty seven delegates from Poland alone. On the other hand America despite all the financial support that it had given to Palestine was entitled to seventeen delegates including the three or four who were in the Executive.

Mizrahi  
tried to  
dominate the  
congress





Aug 17, 1923

-184-

Fortunately I had occasion to come in contact while in Karlsbad with a few people who opened my eyes to the fact that the Zionist movement had really very little to do with the congress. I also happened to read these days a little book by Holitscher. Reise durch das jüdische Palästina. From both of these sources I gather that Zionism is primarily vested in the Haluzim and in the creators of the new Hebraic culture. The young men and women who rival the early American pioneers in grit and daring, who venture to settle in pest ridden lands where they are liable to be struck down at any moment by Arab bullets, and who can look to no such rewards as those that awaited the American pioneer, these Haluzim are proof of the physical vitality of the Jewish people. Men like Ben-Jenodah, Bialik, Ahad-Haam, Tchernichowski and dozens of others who write and sketch and sculpture and publish Jewish artistic forms testify to the spiritual vitality of the Jewish people. The question as the raison d'etre of Zionism is after all a question as to whether the Jewish people has enough physical and spiritual energy to demand self-expression. Men and women of the Haluzim type prove that such energy is present. Such energy needs no self-justification. All arguments in favor of it are futile.

\* \* \*

Sunday, August 19, 1923 (On board S. S. George Washington)

I was a spectator at the congress rather than a participant. I attended only the plenary sessions and none of its committee meetings. The only thing I did ~~xxxxxxx~~ was to deliver an address in Hebrew at the Thursday night (Aug. 9) session on the importance of at least retaining the past budget for the maintenance of the elementary and secondary schools in Palestine, and taking immediate steps to establish the Jewish University. The address was given at a time when it was least calculated to receive attention. The delegates were interested that evening in the Jewish Agency question which was being used by the various speakers as a ground for attacking the existing administration, and were impatiently



awaiting Sokolow's and Weitzmann's addresses on the subject. What was the sense of my taking up at that time so tame a question as to whether or not the organization was to engage in cultural activity? But there had been no previous opportunity for me to put in my suggestions and that was practically the last of the plenary sessions. Lipsky, Goldberg and Rottenberg wanted me to give the address so as to impress the delegates of the other countries with the fact that the Zionist Organization of America included men who had Jewish cultural interests. But unfortunately for their purpose and for my personal vanity the delegates for the most part paid very little attention to what I had to say. There was so much noise that I had to speak at the top of my voice to get myself heard by the few who were interested. I had worked quite hard over the address, that having been the first time that I was to speak in public in Hebrew. I am grateful that I at least came off without disgrace which I might have suffered, if I had not taken care to write out the address.

I made the acquaintance of Dr. Kaminko of Vienna, a man in the fifties. Small, thin, seedy looking with an intelligent but weak face. A great scholar but not a man of the world. He is said to have raised great expectations which have not been realized.

He was introduced to me on Sat. Aug. 4 by Mr. Sol Lamport. Dr. Kaminko at once greeted me as a soul mate. For four hours he kept on talking to me without giving me much chance to say anything to him. He unfurled to me a favorite plan of his to organize a Jewish religious conference for the purpose of meeting the present day problems of Jewish religious life. In order that the conference be representative of all types of Jews who were interested in the future of Judaism he would expect that those who hold liberal views should do nothing to offend even the most orthodox. He would thus bring together Stephen Wise and the Agudath Yisrael. He spoke with such warmth and enthusiasm about this

Paper in  
Hebrew





plan of his that I was carried away and promised to cooperate with him in its realization. But upon calmer consideration it appears to me as a mere dream not to be taken seriously.

When he got through with the explanation of his plan he read to me an article of his which he had written for a periodical that is being issued by Elbogen and Epstein of Berlin, but which had been returned to him without comment. Of course the article did not contain any great discoveries but it displayed a ~~xxx~~ vast fund of knowledge and research and was as good as the average archaeological material of the "great" Jewish scholars. Probably Kaminko is one of those unfortunate persons who get themselves in wrong with most people, and he must have said or written something to displease the editors of that periodical. Kaminko resembles "affe - my old time teacher at the Seminary - but of course much superior to him in knowledge and ability.

---

I enjoyed meeting Mr. Shapiro who was introduced to me Friday night, Aug. 10 by the Garfiels. He is a man in the early thirties, clean cut, vigorous and intelligent looking, bent upon carrying out in a practical way Ahad Haam's conception of Palestine as a cultural center. With that in view he has established a publishing house in Palestine known as Jibneh. He plans to encourage the production of Hebrew literary and artistic creations by drawing upon the best Jewish talent throughout the world. He has already published Jewish music, reproductions of portraits of Jewish men of note and various literary works. Having been told by Garfiel of my connection with the SAJ he suggested that possibly I could be of help to him in the further development of his project.

It appeared to me that the kind of work that he was engaged in was in line with the purposes of the SAJ. I was only too happy to have found something concrete for the SAJ to do without having to expend large funds. The interest in such an undertaking would have the effect of arousing in the members themselves an interest in Jewish culture.



*Talmud* We cannot live on the dry husks of the Talmud. We have to create a new artistic literature expressive of the new social aspirations of mankind. I do not in the least underrate the significance of the Talmud for the centuries during which it was in the process of formation. No people could have done as well under the circumstances such as existed at that time. But to expect the Talmud to be the source of social and spiritual inspiration today is an absurdity. ]

\* \* \*

Monday, August 20, 1923

Mr. Kann of the Hague who is the chief executor in carrying out the plans for a Wolfson Memorial Building in Jerusalem to house the library and lecture courses of the contemplated University asked me to advise him whether Prof. Loewe of Berlin should be encouraged in his desire to come to America to collect the residue of funds necessary to put up the Memorial Building, about \$75,000. I had an interview with Mr. Kann on this subject Friday night, Aug. 10 and another interview with him in the company of Prof. Loewe the next morning. Mr. Kann struck me as a very high class type of Dutch gentleman. (How the Jews take on the color of their environment.) Prof. Loewe I could not make out. His florid complexion, his long red beard, his claim to be specially qualified to address mass meetings in Yiddish, samples of which he would throw in now and then in his conversation, and his almost brazen aggressiveness did not captivate me.

I really did not know what to advise them but suggested that they take advantage of Sol Rosenbloom's approval of Prof. Loewe's coming to America, and ask Sol Rosenbloom to invite Loewe as his guest. I also promised to look into the possibility of utilizing Palestine films as aids to lectures to be given by Prof. Loewe in preparing the ground for his appeal.

---





At one of the informal meetings of the American group at Karlsbad I was introduced to a Dr. Levinson from Chicago. He acknowledged the introduction by saying that he was grateful to me for taking a responsibility off his shoulders by having undertaken to raise the \$5,000 for the Hashilvah. Dr. Klausner had asked him to canvass some of the Chicago Jews in order to enable the Hashilvah to make its appearance again and he had promised to do so, but now he felt relieved of a burden.

*Aug 20, 1923*

On leaving Karlsbad Sunday Aug 12 on the way to Vienna Dr. Levinson happened to be in the same train <sup>with me.</sup> as I was. We spent the entire seven hours of our journey discussing various matters with regard to the Congress, Palestine, the Seminary, etc. I was delighted to find in him a good nationalist Jew familiar with Hebrew culture and something of a publicist in both Hebrew and English at the same time that he had made his mark as a physician. He specialized in children's diseases and had written a text book and many articles in his special field and had done a good deal of original research. He had been in Palestine recently and he was still remembered by some people there as the author of a series of articles that appeared in the Hashilvah in 1914 on Jewish institutions in America. He came to America as a lad of fifteen or sixteen. He is now only thirty-six. Alongside so much achievement what have I accomplished? Here was a man six years my junior giving me advice as to how I might manage to get done some of the literary undertakings I have been dabbling in for the last ten or twelve years. "Take up one thing at a time and work on it until you finish it," he said. I suppose that lack of will power has a great deal to do with my failure to produce any literary work. Nevertheless, I cannot altogether blame myself. I was not fortunate enough to have masters and guides in my youth to teach me system or to inspire me with their example. I lacked both the opportunity and the capacity to come in touch with men of note in the different walks of life. When I contrasted the narrow circle of my acquaintances

*on not publishing*



determin  
ation  
with that of this same Dr. Levinson, I became aware of my limitations to such an extent as to feel discouraged. But of course, I will not submit and fight hard with myself to rise above them.

Dr. Levinson too put in my way another project for the SAJ. He mentioned that the Jewish sculptor, Glizenstein, who is now in London is hard up. If Glizenstein had the means to come to America and to hold an exhibit his resources would be replenished and he would probably go to Palestine where he might develop themes based on the new Jewish life that was springing up in there. What a wonderful achievement it would be, if I could get the SAJ to accept these literary and artistic projects as its principal sphere of activity. I should then feel that I have really accomplished something with the organization.

resignation  
Last Friday night (Aug. 17) I found a telegram in my room from Louis Marshall. It was sent by the Seminary campaign committee. It read "Have asked Sam Lamport to head New York Seminary campaign. Please cable him to accept." In view of my negotiations with Wise I was in a predicament as to what to say to Lamport. If I were to ask him unqualifiedly to accept the chairmanship, and afterwards I would resign from the Seminary, I would be furnishing him with an excuse for malingering on the job after he would undertake it. I therefore thought it best to radio to him as follows: "Please accept chairmanship Seminary campaign regardless my possible resignation. Strictly confidential."

Here on board I met Miss Affachiner. She was one of four or five who completed the special course for teachers that had been organized at the Seminary in 1904 and that turned out a failure because of the inability of Schechter and the other men on the faculty to hold the interest of the young people that attended. Only those who had appreciation for the prestige and glamor of the Seminary remained. I





have always been under the impression that these graduates carried with them the nimbus of Shechterianism, and therefore made no attempt to merge them with the Alumni of the Teachers Institute. To my surprise, however, I found that this Miss Affachiner is without such a nimbus. It was she who had been seeking standing in the Teachers Institute, but she had apparently enough of the Shechterian or Seminary hauterer not to turn to me for information. She asked Ginzberg and he told her that as I had charge of the Teachers Institute he felt that the matter was entirely out of his hands, as I ran things - so he intimated - I ran things pretty much to please myself.

\* \* \*

Sunday, August 26, 1923

I was greeted at the pier last Friday when the steamer arrived by a large delegation of SAJ members. The entire SAJ Review of that week was devoted to greetings to me. In all sincerity I feel that I do not deserve all that friendship which these people are manifesting toward me. I ask myself "Why are they so good to me?" Is it because they feel that I might emancipate them into the larger life of the spirit, into the life where they would be free from their petty cares and from the useless burdens that the past has imposed upon them? But God knows, I myself need the strength and the courage which it should be my business to inspire others with. I realized this when a few hours after I came home I was advised by Estelle Lamport who spoke to me on the 'phone to get Judith back from camp as soon as possible because one of the girls in that camp had died. Not knowing exactly the circumstances of the case I naturally imagined the worst and I trembled as a leaf as I held the telephone. It took some time for me to be convinced that Judith was alright, because I spoke to her by phone. But the interval was black with fear. This is your spiritual leader.

\* \* \*

Doesn't  
deserve  
friendship  
SAJ  
members



Thursday night, Sept. 20, 1923 (V. 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000)

These have been three stormy weeks for me. At one time it looked as though I was finally to accept Wise's offer when suddenly I made up my mind definitely to turn it down and carried this determination into effect. It appears now that my position in the Seminary will be rendered more tolerable to me as a result of the intervention of my friends of the SAJ. That sudden change came about in the following way.

J.I.R.  
When I returned from my trip abroad I learned that the Jewish Light, a weekly periodical issued by a few job seekers who leagued themselves with a few fanatics and which has been publishing articles for the last three months, calculated to pillory me as an arch heretic and menace to Orthodox Judaism - published an exchange of letters that had taken place between a certain Mr. Israel and Dr. Cyrus Adler. I have since learned that this Israel is a usurer whose wealth consists in second mortgages, and who is at the same time a rabid fanatic. In those letters Adler included a statement which he had written to someone else saying that my position in the Seminary is that of Professor of Homiletics and as such I am required to teach only the construction of sermons but not the knowledge of Judaism that goes into the sermons. This statement aroused my indignation and I became more determined than ever to conclude arrangements with Wise..

Clear Rationalization  
But as soon as I began negotiating with Wise I began to feel an uneasiness which is probably the main reason for my having rejected his offer a second time. He did not inspire any confidence in me when I met him after I came back from Europe. I was troubled by the fact that he did not see his way clear to come to the city to see me that week, though if I were in his place I would have considered the matter of engaging a member to the faculty important enough to come to town. Yet the illness of a member of his congregation did bring him to town. That sense of values on his part made me apprehensive of joining his Institute.





When I saw him during the last week in August - I believe Monday or Tuesday night - he did not impress me as appreciating the difficulty of the undertaking which he was going into with his Institute. It seemed all a simple matter to him. Whatever I asked for he immediately granted. I said that I preferred to occupy a chair in Jewish Theology and he at once acceded to my request. But then I happened to learn that Oberman was to teach the historic development of Judaism, and Prof. Gutman of Berlin was to give the Philosophy of Judaism, I naturally realized that Wise was not even awake to the fact that there was a likelihood of duplication or overlapping in the subject matter taught. When I mentioned to him that I should not like to have the rabbinic degree conferred upon the average graduate, he at once fell in with that suggestion. It did not occur to him to reckon with the fact that there were students in the Institute who had entered with the understanding that they were to be rabbis.

The uneasiness was increased to a positive sense of discomfort when Dr. Oberman visited me one or two days after I had seen Wise, and told me that he had hesitated for a long time whether or not to accept the position as permanent member of the faculty in Wise's Institute. He was very much upset on account of the unsystematic manner in which the work was being conducted. Lecturers came and lecturers went and there was no attempt at coordination of the courses. He hoped that this state of affairs would be improved as a result of my accession to the faculty. Was I then going to waste my time bring order out of chaos, with Wise and the members of the faculty working at crisscross purposes? I began to dread such a possibility.

I saw Wise a second time after that. In the course of the conversation I broached the question "Have you a curriculum?" I no sooner asked the question than he shot out with the reply "If you were not my friend Kaplan, I would resent your question." This was said by him as I

Status  
of  
J.I.R.



was walking with him and his wife back and forth on Central Park West at night. I told him that the reason I put this question to him was because of the doubts that Oberman had raised in my mind when he came to see me. He then had it in for Oberman as not having sufficient stability. Of course I tried to counteract his resentment at Oberman's action by representing Oberman as an invaluable addition to the faculty. But as far as I was concerned, Wise's reply and his entire attitude made a very bad impression upon me.

Yet I suppressed my uneasiness and apprehension so keen was my indignation at Adler's contemptuous remarks about me and my work. But I could not think of taking final action on the Wise matter without first consulting the Board of Directors of the SAJ. Before doing that I had two conferences with S. C. Lamport, following up the radio I had sent him from the SS George Washington. He was unalterably opposed to my accepting the position in the JIR. I learned from him that he did not carry out my instruction to keep the possibility of my resigning from the Seminary confidential and that he had practically disclosed it to Marshall. Marshall, as S.C. told me, flew up in the air when he heard it and maintained that I was not interfered with.

The entire board was present on Wed. night, Sept. 5 with the exception of Unterberg, when I explained to them my situation at the Seminary and of Wise's invitation to join his faculty. I was surprised to see nearly all of them favorably disposed to the idea both of my resigning from the Seminary and accepting the offer of the JIR. Lubell, who a year and a half ago advised me strongly against affiliating with Wise, came out most enthusiastically in favor of my making the change. Lubetkin who has always been taken as a conservative sided with Lubell. Winer and J.H. Rubin expressed unqualified approval of my going with Wise. The only ones that were opposed were S. C. Lamport, Joe Levy and Abe Liebovitz. ~~xxxxxxxx~~ As the discussion went on - it lasted to 1:30 A.M.

Why does he  
need SPS  
Board  
permission  
Nelly?





Levy and Liebovitz relented in their opposition. Even S. C. was reconciled to my taking the contemplated step.

\* \* \* \*

Saturday night, Sept. 23, 1923

When I left the meeting there was no doubt any more in my mind as to my accepting the position at the JIR. The next day, however, Benderly, who returned not long ago from Palestine, injected himself into the situation. He learned from Winer the outcome of the meeting which took place at the SAJ rooms on Wednesday night. He called me up Thursday morning and arranged to meet me and H.L. Simmons at Winer's office on Nassau St. (Tribune Building). Simmons was delayed; we, therefore, had but a short time to discuss the outcome of the meeting. Benderly maintained that it would be a mistake for me to join Wise's Institute. It would identify me completely with the Reform group. I was not convinced by what he said. Simmons and Winer sided with me. The Friday night following (Sept. 7) Benderly had supper with us. After supper Lena, he and I took a long walk. It was then that he opened my eyes to the fact that I would be doing a more constructive work for Jewry, if instead of accepting the position at the JIR I were to resign from the Seminary for the purpose of being able to devote myself to the consolidation of the element that is neither orthodox nor reformed, but is looking for a program that shall be both Jewish and modern. There is need for the formation of a third party in present day Judaism and he argued that my resigning from the Seminary would create the psychological occasion for such an undertaking on my part.

This argument of his won me over completely. I vacillated for a while when I reminded myself of having to look to the SAJ for material support. But I dismissed that objection from my mind when my brother-in-law Max, whom I met that same night or early morning, expressed his fears as to the reliability of Wise. My uneasiness which I had repressed

*A third party - resign from Sem but not take position*



throughout the discussions get the better of me this time. At last my mind was made up both to resign from the Seminary and not to accept Wise's offer of the position at his Institute.

As soon as Sabbath was over I hurried to Wise. There I met the Lindheims. She ~~had~~ was dressed in "knickers" having come a few hours before together with Wise's daughter from Lake Placid whence they had hiked to New York. I mention this to record how often I would have had many deeply rooted Jewish habits jarred by the class of people with whom I would have to associate if I were to have joined Wise's Institute. Miss Wise insisted that I see the painting of Mrs. Lindheim done by her mother Mrs. Wise. Not being thrilled by the picture I was at a loss what to say. All these trivialities annoyed me. I came to talk about an important matter, and to state a decision that meant so much to me, and here I was called upon to fish out a compliment for something that did not interest or thrill me. I am afraid that being in Wise's company would have brought me into such irrelevant time without number.

Finally Wise called me into another room where he was ready to listen to what I had to say. Before I began he asked me whether I cared to have Lindheim join us. At first I hesitated, but then gave my consent. I told him of my twofold decision. To confirm my statement as to my resigning from the Seminary I read to him the resignation which I had drawn up the day before. As I look back, I cannot forgive myself for having done so, but I hope to straighten this matter out before long. Wise seemed very much disappointed at my finally refusing the position at the JIR. He claimed I had given him the impression that I was determined to accept the position, and that it was only a question of arranging the details connected with the post offered me. But he was gracious in giving me the benefit of the doubt. On the whole I must say that his conduct that evening put a doubt in my mind as to whether or not I acted wisely in burning my bridges that way in front of me. I

where is  
letter  
resignation  
very  
ambiguous





assured him that I was going to burn my bridges behind me; but subsequent talks with my friends of the SAJ caused me to change my mind.

The next day (Sunday) Mrs. Lindheim came to see me. She voiced her disappointment at my action and hoped that before long I would change my mind again. She poh-pooed the idea of my organizing a third party. She said I lacked the force and power to popular appeal necessary for swaying the masses. I could do such a thing only with the hlep of Wise.

On Rosh Hashonah (Tues., Sept. 11) H.L. Simmons and Joe Levy asked me what I intended to do. I told them that I had decided to send in my resignation to the Seminary immediately after Rosh Hashonah. They pleaded with me that I hold off for a while, as they expected that they, S. C. Lamport, Brown, etc., would have occasion to meet Marshall, and try to straighten the matter out with him. At first I was taken aback by their suggestion. I regarded it as a breach of faith not to send in my resignation after I had told Wise that I would. But they argued that it was only a question of holding it off for another day or two.

On Friday, (Sept. 14) H.L. Simmons called on me, and told me of a conference he had had with S. C. Lamport and Brown at which my problem was discussed. They came to the conclusion that it would not be right for me to send in any resignation just now, but that I should address a letter to Adler in which I would ask him to explain his statement which appeared in the "Light of Israel" to the effect that I was not teaching the knowledge of Judaism that was to go into the sermon.

I realized that I could not play a lone hand in this matter. I accordingly accpeted their advice and framed a letter asking Adler to reconcile his statement about my work in the Seminary with the description given of my courses both in the Seminary and at the Teachers Institute Registers. I sent off the letter on Sunday, Sept. 16.

was going  
to send  
in  
resignation  
clearly lets  
others  
make his  
decision



Today (Sat. Sept. 22) I received a reply. The letter is conciliatory and implies that I can go on teaching as I had. He intimates that I represent the minority opinion in the Seminary, as my views differ both from his and from that of most of my colleagues. It therefore looks as though I am going to go on with my work in the Seminary as of old.

What annoys me is the attempt on the part of Sam Cohen, the Executive Director of the United Synagogue to meddle with the affairs of the Seminary. I hold him responsible for much of the unpleasantness I have been enduring there. Now he is in league with Rabbi Max Drob, who is the chairman of the campaign to raise a permanent fund of \$750,000 for the Seminary and \$250,000 for the United Synagogue. Drob is rabbi of an Orthodox congregation in Washington Heights which is presided over by Emanuel Hertz, a brother of the Chief Rabbi of England, whom I suspect of being an unscrupulous self-seeker and of using Orthodoxy to feather his nest. Hertz is a lawyer for some rabbinical organization that is interested in the sale of wine for sacramental (sacreligious) purposes. Whether Drob is sincere in his Orthodoxy is very hard for me to say, but that he is interested in Drob first and foremost there can be no doubt, and that he is blatant and vulgar in the means he employs to further the interests of Drob is too apparent to be overlooked.

When I was in the midst of my contest with the Board of Trustees at the Center I learned that he had made some slighting remarks about my supposed heterodoxy. I gave him to understand then that I knew of his attack. Ever since then there has not been much love lost between us.

While in the midst of all this hubub, Drob informed me some time ago that Fromenson would come to interview me about the Teachers Institute. Fromenson came to see me on Thursday (Sept. 13). In the course of the interview Fromenson dropped the remark that Drob was very much concerned about the rumor that I was teaching irreligion at the





Teachers Institute. This got me very angry, and I told Fromenson that I do not want either Drob or Sam Cohen to pass on my interview.

\* \* \*

Sunday, Sept. 23, 1923

The SAJ again rented the Leslie Rooms on 83 St. cor. Broadway to hold the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services there. I want to record the length of time each part of these services took together with other details of the services so that I might use it for future reference, p.G.

Rosh Hashanah evening: 6:30 (daylight saving time throughout)

morning: (1st day) 8:15

In the *חג ה' / קריאת* we omitted some of the psalms.

8:45 *פ' אה*

9:40 Reading of Torah

10:30 Explanation of the ceremony of the sounding of Shofar as heralding the sovereignty of God. This followed by reading in English of Psalm 47 and then responsive reading of that Psalm in Hebrew.

10:55 sermon

11:40 Musaph service (read with congregational responses the English *p. 189*)

1:20 Conclusion of service.

The day following we concluded the services at 12:50.

Read poem "My Faith" after *שמואל הנביא*

Sang *שמואל הנביא* in the original

No *דבר* ceremony.

Yom Kippur Services

Services announced for 6:30, began 6:40

After Kol Nidrei read selection "The Synagogue" by Eliot, see booklet.









תכלה אף חבן till ; at this point I again explained the  
 meaning of the allusion to angels and read translation of entire poem  
 אנגליה ; חבן ; "My Faith", sqq. responsive readings of English תכלה  
 חבן sqq. till כה פנק.

At this point explained value of reading and dramatizing description of the Avodah.

Began חבן חבן חבן sqq. till חבן חבן חבן

Explained the sacrifice of the scapegoat.

Resumed from חבן חבן חבן till חבן חבן חבן

Resumed חבן חבן חבן

Explained the value of reading the martyrology, which I asked them afterwards to repeat after the Cantor paragraph by paragraph. The interest lagged toward the end. Resumed חבן חבן חבן sqq. till חבן חבן חבן

Read Psalm 139 (see booklet); resumed חבן חבן חבן sqq.

No חבן ceremony. Concluded Musaph service with reading "There is No Unbelief" (see booklet) pointing out that G. is known and worshipped under different names but the time will come when He will be known and worshipped as "one God."

4:00 Minha.

I explained Graetz's theory of the ~~make~~ background to book of Jonah. Read it in Hebrew and read in addition the English of the last chapter.

In חבן חבן חבן we omitted the following: חבן חבן חבן  
 חבן חבן חבן till חבן חבן חבן; the Selichot till חבן חבן חבן; חבן חבן חבן till חבן חבן חבן

Read selection from Union Prayer book on Charity, p. 299.

5:25: Neilah. Said it slowly. "Lead the English with congregation responding חבן חבן חבן. Concluded חבן חבן חבן with prayer in Union Prayer Book p. 370

6:40: Maariv service. 6:50 conclusion.



Thursday, Sept. 27, 1923

Teaching  
up him  
my  
Questions

Last Sunday I resumed my work at the Teachers Institute. The sight of thirty-one young people all of whom are vitally interested in Jewish subject matter sitting before me awaiting eagerly what I have to teach them revived my drooping spirits. The thought that I barely escaped selling for a mess of pottage the privilege of imparting my ideas to them and shaping their minds in such a way as to be of service to the Jewish cause made me relish the opportunity of standing once again before a Teachers Institute class with a joy so keen as I had seldom experienced before.

I did not teach that day. I put a number of questions to the students by means of which I might be in a position to adapt my course to their needs. I asked them the following:

- Class
- 1) Describe your Jewish upbringing and your reaction to it.
  - 2) Give your idea of the history of Judaism; state how Judaism came into existence, whether it has undergone any changes, and if it has, what is the nature of those changes.
  - 3) Would you advocate any changes in it in the future? If yes, of what nature should those changes be?
  - 4) What value do you attach to a) religious ceremonies, such as the observance of Sabbaths and festivals, dietary laws, etc.? b) to prayer in general, and to the prayers in our ritual in particular? c) What do you conceive to be the relation of Jewish nationality to Jewish religion?
  - 5) Do you think that Judaism can improve character, and if so how? In answering these questions, state what you expect the course in religion to give you.

---

Last Sunday night Henry Hurwitz, chancellor of the Menorah <sup>society</sup> was over to see me. He told me of his troubles with the Menorah <sup>Magazine</sup> on





account of Irving Lehman. Louis Marshall and others of that group<sup>losing</sup> interest and withdrawing their support. Lehman has been offended by Hurwitz's theology or lack of it. Marshall became bitter against the Menorah Journal because of a prize winning article that had appeared there which described the American <sup>Jewish</sup> Executive Committee as Shtadlonim.

Hurwitz has some very ambitious plans for the Menorah, the principal one being that of establishing a sort of lay university for Jewish culture. I am certainly in sympathy with such an undertaking and I would very much like to see the SAJ take a leading part in it. But how can the SAJ be gotten to do that, when the pressing problem just now is that of securing permanent and adequate quarters?

---

I attended today a luncheon meeting at Weinberger's, 17 W. 24 St. of the rabbis and seminary faculty to discuss the steps preparatory to the conference which is called for Oct. 7 at Hotel Astor. There were eighteen rabbis present. Drob presided. Not much was accomplished. I went away with a more fraternal feeling in my heart for the Seminary personnel.

\* \* \*

Friday, Sept. 28, 1923

At a Board meeting of the SAJ last night I urged upon those present (H.L. Simmons, Joe Levy, Winer, Harry Liebovitz and Sam Lubell) that we must be careful not to lose sight of the aim of our organization which is that of evolving the type of Judaism in this country that is likely to live, a Judaism that is both ethical and Hebraic in character. I warned against the danger of being ~~diverted~~ from that aim by taking up the problem of a building for the Society. Once we do that we are bound to shrink into a congregation interested in its own upkeep. I advocated organizing groups similar to our own in different parts of the city and of the country, and then having those groups form the party

afraid of  
SAJ getting  
building

wants  
propaganda  
fund



in Judaism which will embrace the vast mass of our people who want to remain Jews but cannot affiliate with Orthodoxy, because of its medievalism and with Reform because of its unJewishness. Those present were convinced by my arguments in favor of the SAJ engaging in propaganda work and voted to establish a propaganda fund of \$10,000 for the first year.

I pray to God that I be able to carry out at least some of the plans that I suggest and for which the SAJ is so ready with its support.

\* \* \* \*

P. 203

Saturday, Sept. 29, 1923

Four young men from Minneapolis three of whom are trying to get into the Seminary came to see me today. They are alumni of a very unusual kind of Talmud Torah in that city. It is unique in producing young people who are actually interested in things Jewish. It has a staff of ten teachers all of whom with the exception of the principal, Mr. Ewen, are secularist Jews. But it owes its spirit and success to its principal founder, a physician by the name of Dr. Gordon. He takes a personal interest in the pupils and in the graduates and he has communicated to them a good deal of his Jewish enthusiasm. Some of them either teach in Sunday schools or lead Jewish clubs or organize services purely out of a genuine interest in the Jewish people.

A student of the Seminary, Simon Greenberg, who has come under my influence as a result of his being a student of the Teachers Institute happened to be in Minneapolis some time ago. He had occasion to speak to a group of young people about the ministry and painted it apparently in such glowing colors that they decided to come to N.Y. and join the Seminary.

But upon coming here they met with rebuffs. One of them, David Goldstein, was asked by Prof. Israel Davidson whether he was observant of the ceremonies. Goldstein told him he hadn't been but he would like to be. Davidson, instead of encouraging him, replied that





he ought to have applied rather to the Hebrew Union College. When this same Goldstein saw Adler and probably conveyed to him in implicit terms what he told me explicitly, viz., that he was not interested in Judaism but rather in Jewish culture, Adler told him that Dropsie College was the right institution for him, but not the Seminary.

Kaplan, another of the Minneapolis young men, who looks to be very earnest and spiritual type, has not received any knowledge of Talmud. Instead of helping him to make up his deficiency, Davidson told him to come again next year, if he will have acquired in the meantime the necessary knowledge.

Is that the way to attract desirable young men to the ministry?

They asked my advice with regard to joining Wise's Institute of Religion. Goldstein said that under no circumstances would he join the Institute after what he had seen during the three summer weeks that he attended the courses there. There was no plan or organization whatever to the work that was being done in that institution.

Kaplan was interested in social work and could get along without the knowledge of the Talmud. He was undecided what he would do.

A ~~xxx~~ third man who has been only about two years in this country and who still has to take undergraduate work at college will apply to the JIR in order to improve in his English.

In this way good human material for the Jewish cause is ~~xxxx~~ frittered away.

\* \* \* \*

Monday, October 8, 1923

On Sunday night, Sept. 30 (Hoshana Rabbah night) the members of the SAJ came together for what was expected to be a jolly social evening. It turned out to be a dismal affair. I seemed to have lost all sense of fitness and proportion both in arranging and carrying out the program. I should have known that Sol Lamport and Mr. Shevitz are not



the kind of people who are capable of addressing an audience. Of course, if they had complied with my request to write out what they had to say, the affair would not have been half as bad. But such an "if" is not to be thought of in the case of men of that kind who have not the least conception of what it is to take advice in matters of intellectual self-improvement. The result was a fiasco.

To add to the dullness of the evening, I failed to take Simmons' hint to talk only half an hour, but talked one hour and twenty minutes about my experiences at Karlsbad. I had been laboring under the impression that the people really wanted to hear about my trip to Europe. So at least they had kept <sup>on</sup> telling me and I was foolish enough to take them at their word. Moreover, they appeared to be interested while I was talking. This misled me into giving all that I had primed myself for. In addition to my talking unduly long, I said a good many things that were tactless. I declared Rabbi Berlin responsible for the hubub at the congress, ~~when~~ <sup>he</sup> in his demagogic way attacked the radicals. I was not sparing in my denunciation of the Mizrahi. On the whole I could not have produced a very hopeful and optimistic state of mind with regard to Palestine in those who listened to me. This time, I must admit, May and Sam Lampert were right in finding fault with me for being too outspoken and negative.

This unforeseen effect of my talk, together with the exasperation which Simmons showed at my not having kept within the half hour he suggested, upset me for the entire day following. I knew that some of the SAJ people attach such importance to the outward success of the program meeting that they are panic stricken if one or two affairs do not turn out to be successful. As a matter of fact, even with all of the mismanagement on my part, the people could have retrieved the rest of the evening if they had possessed the least amount of intellectual and spiritual initiative. They could have asked questions, or have joined





in singing some of the Jewish melodies that had been mimeographed for them. But they are so used to having professional talent entertain them that they are totally helpless when it comes to doing anything for themselves.

Besides, could I help feeling discouraged when all of the ideals that the SAJ is supposed to stand for are jeopardized by the failure of one or two social evenings.

The mental depression which I suffered when I realized that it does not pay to speak one's mind prevented me from taking part in the reception given to Sir Mond on Wednesday, Oct. 3 at Town Hall. There was only one thing that I felt like saying, if I were to have spoken, and that was to urge Mond to <sup>unite</sup> ~~unite~~ the Weizmann and Brandeis forces. But to say such things would have been unconventional, and I thought it best not to come to the meeting rather than indulge in a lot of meaningless platitudes which I never can roll off with adequate glibness to make them sound plausible. I can never utter a platitude, but it somehow manages to sound just like what it is, hollow and irrelevant.

---

I should have mentioned that on Sunday afternoon (Sept. 30) I addressed the students of the Institute. I said to them what I had in mind to tell them at the opening ~~series~~ exercises of the Institute which took place on Thursday night before Rosh Hashanah, but which I did not attend because my mind was all in a whirl on account of my contemplation to resign from the Seminary.

My message to the students was as follows: The T.I. greets you in the name of the Jewish people. In the name of that people it takes you seriously, i.e., it declares to you how necessary you are to its life and growth and it respects your <sup>separate</sup> personalities. You can reciprocate this attitude of the Institute by taking it, and the Jewish people through it seriously, i.e. by evincing the desire to serve and by making the most of your own personalities intellectually and ethically.



Tuesday, December 25, 1923

Yesterday my nerves were on edge all day by reason of the evident intent on the part of the authorities of the Seminary campaign to ...shelve me.

I have introduced into the SAJ late Friday night services. The first service was held on Oct. 13 ( <sup>PU</sup> 1923 ). I am utilizing the opportunity presented by these services to develop what I consider the only kind of feasible program for Judaism, a program based upon the conception of Judaism as a civilization.

Realizing that so long as I am identified with the Seminary I must do everything in my power to further its interests, and that it is essential to my own peace of mind to be on good terms with the Seminary personnel, including the faculty and alumni, I have "made up" with Drob, and have taken a hand in the campaign for the million dollar Endowment Fund. I spoke for the Seminary at Buffalo on Sunday, November 11 (Armistice Day), at the Brooklyn Jewish Center on Thursday, December 6 and at Pittsburgh on Sunday, December 9. I also asked the Board of Trustees of the SAJ to appoint a committee to raise at least \$10,000 from among the members. Joseph Levy has been active in getting most of the members to contribute and it appears that he will succeed in getting \$18,000. Considering the negative attitude to the Seminary that my negotiations with Wise must have created in the minds of some of the Trustees, the fact that the Jewish Education Association has drained so many of our people, and that this is not a very prosperous season in business for most of them, the amount raised is an evidence of rather more than a usual degree of interest in <sup>Jewish</sup> matters and institutions.

On the other hand when I recall that this same Joe Levy was on the point of resigning from the SAJ because Miss Machlowitz advised

Kap. raises  
Money for  
Seminary.





his wife to take out their daughter, Miriam from the Hebrew School on account of Miriam's detrimental influence upon the other children, I do not feel that my gains have been very substantial.

The following is a record of the courses I have given at the Seminary:

<u>In Midrash</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>In Homiletics</u>
Began teaching in Seminary	January, 1910	
Selections from <del>until till</del> <sup>תחילת תורה</sup> 1910-1911		
till about <sup>תחילת</sup>		
Selections from <sup>תלמוד</sup> <del>till end.</del> 1911-1912		Study and analysis of model sermons
Selections from <sup>תורה ודבר</sup> 1912-1913		
Selections from first two chapters of <sup>דברים</sup> and from first part of <sup>שמות</sup>	1913-1914	
Text of <sup>דברים</sup> as far as <sup>נח</sup>	1914-1915	Gathering of sermon material for sermons of week.
Text of <sup>דברים</sup> from <sup>נח</sup> to about <sup>תחילת</sup>	1915-1916	Practical sermon work - Biographies and theological concepts.
Text of <sup>דברים</sup> till about half of that book	1916-1917	Detailed interpretation of Genesis.
Text of <sup>דברים</sup> till about <sup>תחילת</sup>	1917-1918	The psychologic and sociological Aspect of the God concept.
No Midrash on account of misunderstanding of registrar, etc.	1918-1919	Practical sermon work with class on sermons preached that year at Center



	1919-1920	The Problem of Rein- terpretation: Scripture and Rabbinic writings.
Text of שלח	1920-1921	Detailed interpretation of Genesis.
Text of ויקרא	1921-1922	The Jewish sanctions for some of the current re- ligious and ethical con- cepts (Freedom, nature, etc.
Text of ויקרא	1922-1923	Technique of sermon - Generalization etc. Sermon material (notebooks)
Text of ויקרא	1923-1924	The problem of reinter- pretation: Scriptures and rabbinic writings (note- books)

(cont. in Vol. III, p.210)

This evening the Hoschanders paid us a visit. Hoschander was appointed recently professor of Biblical Exegesis at the Seminary. His appointment took place solely at Adler's suggestion to the Board of Trustees and without the consent of the faculty. Ginzberg and Davidson protested against Adler's action, and there was quite a row at one of the Faculty meetings at which the matter was brought up.

As far as outward appearance is concerned Hoschander makes a very negative impression. But as a scholar he seems to be very full of his subject, and certainly has much more to give than the late Friedlaender. (I have since been informed by the students that they learn next to nothing from him (Dec. 14/1924). I was rather surprised at his views of the Torah and of the prophets. He is reputed to be





*Hosander  
critical of  
D.T.*  
strictly orthodox, but what he said about the Mosaic authorship is anything but orthodox, though he was violently opposed to the Wellhausen theory. Personally I learned a very important fact from him, and that is that there is no name preceding the Exodus that bears the name of Yahway. When I mentioned to him the names of <sup>Yahweh</sup> and he claimed that they are not theophorous names, and the in them having nothing to do with 'ahweh. If that is the case the solution of the problem raised by Ex VI 3 is quite different from that given by the critics.

Yet when he quoted with approval the suggestion of a student Rosenblatt that "apsu" is the origin of abyss, I became sceptical of his learning. After he left I looked up the origin of the word abyss, and found that it was derived from a + byssos which means without location.

\* \* \*

Wednesday,  
~~Monday~~ December 26, 1923

Leon J. Lang, who is executive secretary of the SAJ reported to me this morning the conference he had with <sup>Harry</sup> Simmons, the chairman of the Board of Trustees. Simmons who two years ago helped to bring about the organization of the SAJ, is of too pragmatic and impatient a type to be satisfied to plod along with a heavy weight on his back to the distant and perhaps unattainable goal of awakening in our people a real live interest in Judaism. The strain and the effort to produce the least tangible result are heartbreaking. If at least there were some prospect that results of our efforts would become visible in the children. It does not require much prophetic insight to see in them a generation even less Jewish than their parents. Is it a wonder that a man like Simmons should feel disheartened? A week ago he visited the B'nai Meshurun Synagogue and observed the nature and the spirit of the services of the congregation that worships there. He came to the con-



Dec 26, 1923

clusion that the SAJ is demanding too much of its members. So long as that is the case the members of the SAJ are bound to be limited.

To say that brooding upon this situation has a corroding effect upon my mind, is to put it mildly. What is the way out?

I have come upon an idea. But the question is, Is it feasible?

If the very people who are associated as an SAJ were willing to change the purpose and the name of the organization and become a Society for the Advancement of the Religion of America I would be in a position to utilize the training and spiritual momentum of the years, I have spent in Jewish study and foster a spiritual movement that would certainly grow from day to day as Judaism in this country is waning from day to day. In my own personal life I would live as a Jew, artificially maintaining all of the elements of Jewish civilization, but in my public work I would articulate the spiritual aspects of American life, and try to build up spiritual values in terms of the needs we experience here in America. Such a change of purpose to my public activity would be in line with my fundamental conception of religion as that element of a civilization which has to do with the sanctions for requiring the individual to conform to its customs, living up to its standards of duty and law, recalling its past and cherishing its future. Apart from a particular civilization a religion is a pious futility. So far I have been interested in Judaism as a civilization comprising both secular and religious elements, in the hope that there would be some Jews who would be ready to cultivate it. But the more I work, the less hope I have of seeing Judaism taking root in this country. Under such circumstances there are only the following two alternatives before me, either to migrate to Palestine and there to die in a losing battle with the worst ~~obscurantism~~ obscurantism in the world, or to continue working here and utilize contemporaneous American needs to develop such spiritual values as might enable us to meet those needs in a

Minister  
General  
Am. Rel.  
Shows  
That  
Kap.  
most  
deeply  
ethics &  
community  
oriented.





rational and humane way. After all God wants to choose America as the instrument of his will no less than he wanted Israel of old to act as an instrument of that kind. The nations of old rejected his Torah, but new nations have sprung up since. He certainly offers them too the chance of accepting and living in accordance with His law. Why assume beforehand that they are in no condition to accept it? I do not believe this of the American people. With all its faults I love it too dearly to affirm that it is doomed to sink into selfish materialism. Would to God that I were granted the opportunity to serve the American people by demonstrating even in a small way that it can become chosen of God as Israel of old was chosen, and even on a more comprehensive and significant scale.

The historical religions have only a value for the historian and archaeologist. In so far as every cultured person must know something of history and archaeology he must be acquainted with the spirit and development of those religions. But to expect that they can function in a vital and telling manner at the present time is to fly in the face of facts.

I have just come back from the Seminary where Prof. L. Ginzberg gave a lecture on the Problem and method of the Halacha under the auspices of the American Academy for Jewish Research to an audience of about fifty people consisting of some members of the Seminary and Dropsie Faculties, alumni and students. There were very few outsiders. He dealt with the subject of Halacha from a purely archaeological point of view, primarily as subject matter for history. There was not the least intimation of a problem as to Jewish Halacha being made relevant today. Escaping from life and its problems to history and its puzzles should enable one to maintain that philosophic serenity which might be taken for saintliness.

Research  
Archaeology



Sunday, February 10, 1924

Last Sunday night (Feb. 3) we celebrated the second anniversary of the founding of the SAJ. The celebration was held at the Grand Ball Room of the Astor Hotel. There were about 420 guests. A "milchding" dinner was served so as to have it kosher and inexpensive. Most of the people who attended the dinner would not hesitate to spend on the average of \$10 a person on a Sunday night at one of the "cabaret" places. But at a gathering where one must listen to speeches about Judaism inspite of the singing and dancing which are part of the affair, six dollars is considered by no means moderate. Those who managed the affair took special pains to emphasize the good time, the sociability and the dancing. When, therefore, an attempt was made to cut out the dancing between courses the ~~table~~ table of "Juniors" there were about fifty of them - sent a walking delegate to me to protest against the ruling. There were six speakers beside myself. Each of them spoke on the average of seven to eight minutes. While they were rather amateurish, I thought that the mere fact of getting uneducated laymen to express themselves on the problem of Judaism was quite an achievement for the organization. But unfortunately the rest of the people didn't think so. They felt themselves cheated somewhat of the good time they came to have.

Of course the delay in getting together and starting the affair was partly the cause of the growing impatience of the people. We were supposed to start promptly at seven. Instead we began at about 8:00. The speaking began at 10:00. I rose to speak at 11:10 and got through about 12:00. Fortunately I held the attention of nearly every one present. I had put a good deal of time into the preparation of the address. It was no easy matter to find something striking to say about the SAJ, considering the way I have been feeling about it of late. Nevertheless, I managed to formulate a real message. My effort having





proved successful the second anniversary of the SAJ is registered in the minds of those who attended as a triumph. As far as I am concerned, I see that the only thing for me to do is to keep on jogging along like a drayhorse. So far it's all up hill. Maybe I'll get to level road some day.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, February 13, 1924

*Real reason for reorganizing Seminary*

In a short interview I had with Cyrus Adler yesterday at the Seminary I learned what had led to the reorganization of the Seminary. In 1901 Isidor Straus who was at that time president of the Educational Alliance was holding a meeting of the Board of Directors of that organization. He brought up for discussion the question why the Educational Alliance seemed unable to prevent the outbreak of gangsterism on the East Side. Adler who happened to be present at the meeting said that by teaching a little bit of English and civics they must not expect to make good citizens out of the Jewish immigrants. "Are you doing anything to teach the morals and religion? Here in this city we have a Jewish Theological Seminary which is about to go out of existence because you people do not consider morality and religion important." Schiff who happened to sit alongside of Adler was struck by this casual remark and decided to call a meeting at his house to consider the reorganization of the Seminary. This is how the present Seminary arose.

In the afternoon I attended the faculty meeting of the Seminary. For the first time I had occasion to learn what, according to Adler, the Seminary stands for. Ginzberg's suggestion to establish courses in Theology and Philosophy of Religion was being discussed. It is hard to say what Ginzberg has up his sleeve. Anyhow I could see that Adler was trying to swing the discussion so as to inveigle me into making some statement that would compromise me. He began in his drawly way to state what he believed to be the policy of the Seminary.



There are two kinds of people, he said, those who naturally accept tradition and who entertain doubts only when there is strong proof against what tradition affirms; and there are those who naturally disbelieve or doubt whatever is handed down by tradition unless they find strong proof to verify it. The policy of the seminary requires that a man belong to the former of these types of mind. I interpolated that there was a third alternative, and that was to distinguish between such tradition as conflict with experience and those which are of the same character as the rest of human experience. I would not accept any tradition about some miracle without some proof to confirm it; whereas I would accept the stories which sound perfectly natural and in keeping with what else we know about the situations they describe.

\* \* \* \*

Wednesday, April 30, 1924

When I came home this afternoon Lena told me that Jacob Klein the lawyer called up and left word that a child of Mr. Israelson who is a member of the SAJ was very sick and was going to be operated on this afternoon. It was Israelson's wish that I should say prayers for the child. What should be my attitude in the matter? I do not know this Mr. Israelson. If he had known me he probably would not address such a request to me. Are we still living in the age of the "medicine man" and "miracle worker" or is there something to the power of prayer which we should have sufficient faith in, despite the scepticism held by science? I am at a loss what to do. Merely to disillusion the man by telling him that he put to me an impossible request would be to no purpose; yet to give him the impression that I take it with a hundred-per-cent seriousness would be rather dishonest.

In a case of this kind the solution is, let the matter drift and don't take yourself or Mr. Israelson too seriously. So we compromise with ourselves.

Editor  
George  
Kop on  
Charge  
don't

Request  
for Kop to  
pray for  
a sick  
child





Thursday, May 1, 1924

Last night the Lubell's gave an evening to a number of SAJ friends and myself. The discussion turned upon the advisability of working out a code of practice.

I was happy in the thought that I found a way of coming in contact with the members of the SAJ without wasting time in making individual calls. At the same time I hope to develop a better understanding of the aims of the SAJ. The evenings given so far - at the homes of H. Liebovitz, Bromberg, Alt, Klein, Siegelstein, Schultz and Lubell - seemed to afford a great deal of social and intellectual pleasure to everyone. I found myself becoming more enthusiastic when only a while ago I was disillusioned. It came about in the following way:

Lena suggested to Mrs. <sup>Munichin</sup> ~~Munshain~~ that she arrange an evening within three or four weeks and invite a number of the members whom so far I have not had occasion to meet except casually. She replied that she would gladly do it, but she is afraid that the people whom she would invite would imagine that she got them together for the purpose of having me administer a scolding to them. When Lena asked her how could such an idea come into their heads, she replied, "Don't you realize that when Dr. Kaplan discusses his Code of Practice he naturally has to mention that it is wrong for people to play bridge five times a week, to play golf while the services take place Saturday morning, and matters of a similar nature? The people who do these things would feel guilty. Next morning they would call me up and give me a scolding for having subjected them to this punishment."

\* \* \*

Monday, May 12, 1924

The annual meeting of the SAJ last night ran off very well. I surprised myself by once more presenting the purpose of the society without the usual labor pains that precede every time I have to make



an address. It being a business meeting, I started out by saying that I would discuss the main business of the Society which was the advancement of Judaism. We expect to advance Judaism, I said, by making it function in our lives religiously, culturally and ethically.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, September 16, 1924

During the winter when I am occupied with my routine duties I look forward to the summer months to make up for the time spent on things of small moment and to concentrate on the effort to publish a detailed statement of my ideas on Judaism. The summer of two years ago and of last year I wasted in traveling. I therefore made up my mind that I would use this summer to good advantage. But as I consider what I have accomplished the last four months I am very much dissatisfied. I succeeded in writing one address for the Teachers Conference, in working up two essays as propaganda literature for the SAJ, and in sketching the rough draft of what is to be the first chapter of "Judaism As a Civilization." This time I have no one to blame, not even myself. My health does not permit me to work steadily for any length of time. The first part of the summer is broken up by the hay fever. I had hoped that the inoculations which I took regularly since the last week in April right through July would relieve me of the discomfort. But they seemed to do me very little good. The last three weeks in July I was annoyed by a bad throat. In addition, I have developed of late a tired feeling in the legs. All this together with the continual anxiety about catching cold or developing a headache is beginning to eat away a goodly part of my time and energy.

After spending a weary and tiresome July in the city, Judith, Hadassah, Lena and I made up our minds to spend the greatest part of August in Camp Modin. (The camp was organized three years ago by Alex Dushkin and Albert Schoolman. Although they both occupied well





*Camp  
Modin*

paying positions in Jewish educational work in this city, they were unhappy because of the wrong attitude taken by our philanthropists and communal leaders toward social workers and educators. They conceived the ambition, to a large extent due to Benderly's example, of achieving economic independence. The summer camp, with the few weeks that it requisitioned the complete attention of its organizers, seemed to offer an opportunity for building up an independent source of income while they were engaged during the greater part of the year in communal work. Both Dushkin and Schoolman came to me at that time and urged me to enter into partnership with them. It was then that I was leaving the Center and preparing to organize the SAJ. I was strongly inclined to go in with them, but Lena strongly dissuaded me - for which as I now view the matter, I cannot be grateful enough to her.

Incidental to utilizing the camp as a means of achieving economic independence, Dushkin and Schoolman were also anxious to experiment with it as a means of having the boys of middle class Jewish parents move in an environment that is completely Jewish for at least eight or nine weeks during the year. They planned to build a model Jewish camp. Hence their slogan, "A camp with a Jewish idea." It was I who suggested to them that they call the camp Modin after the village near Jerusalem whither Mattathias and his sons fled from Syrian persecution.

Both from an economic and from a Jewish standpoint, the camp is far from having come up to their expectations. Economically they have to keep on sinking money and paying interest on their loans. As far as its Jewishness is concerned, they have so far neither found the counsellors who are able to carry out a Jewish program nor have they discovered the material calculated to carry out their purpose. Moreover they cannot afford to depart from the traditional conceptions of Jewish upbringing without antagonizing the parents. Hence the teaching



and the services are of the traditional type. The councillors do not take enthusiastically to the "Jewish idea." In fact, the last two years they were quite antagonistic to it. On the other hand, I have heard of youngsters who refuse to stay at the camp because, as they put it, the boys have to "davin all the time."

Nevertheless I believe that the camp exerts a wholesome Jewish influence on a good many of the boys and girls that spend the summer there. The thoroughly Jewish spirit which prevails on Sabbath mornings, the singing of the Z'miroth at the dinner on the Sabbath Eve and noon cannot but leave a lasting impression that is always bound to dispose them favorably toward Judaism.

I enjoyed my stay at the camp because in addition to the physical recreation which it afforded me, I had two or three people with whom I was able to carry on fruitful conversation. Scheelman, who is one of the owners of the camp was not present during my stay there because he was taking charge of the camp of CJI. But Dushkin was there and also Berkson who, upon his return from Palestine about a year and a half ago, entered into partnership with D. & Seh. I also found Brickner there, who with his wife and child occupied a house that belonged to the camp, but about ten minutes alk from where I stayed. Brickner who is a graduate of Hebrew Union College was one of the group that together with Friedlaender I gave instruction, as special class of the Teachers Institute some seven to ten years ago.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, September 17, 1924

Brickner is now a rabbi with a congregation in Toronto. As we judge rabbis, he is very successful, although both his Jewish knowledge and his general culture could stand a great deal of amendment without becoming very learned or too well informed. He reads a good deal of journalistic literature and most of the books that have a





popular vogue, but that is primarily for the purpose of having something to say in the editorial which he writes weekly for the local Jewish English Review published in Toronto. His congregation is officially Reformed. He keeps in touch with many communal activities. This fact together with the one that he is backed by the wealthier part of the Jewish community gives him influence with the Gentile world with which he comes in contact. That, of course, insures his standing with the Jews throughout Canada. Such is the reputation that he has achieved in the two or three years that he has been there that he is much sought for as associate by some of the most prominent Reformed rabbis in the country, such as Schanfarber and Stolz of Chicago and Stephen Wise of this city. The last I heard was that he was negotiating with Wise.

Having brought from his boyhood environment strong nationalistic leanings as is evidenced by the fact that he was one of the active members of the Herzl Club to which Silver of Cleveland, Chipkin, Neuman and others who have become prominent in the world of Jewish affairs belonged, he succeeded in retaining a strong sense for Jewishness despite his HUC training, although he did acquire there a good deal of cant about "religion" of which he finds it difficult to rid himself. He seems to have succeeded in bringing in something of a Jewish spirit into his congregations, insofar as he has been advocating a somewhat intensive Jewish education for the children, and continuation classes for young people. He experienced little difficulty in abolishing the second day of the holiday observances. From this fact I gather that he was dealing with an amorphous group that was ready to follow the rabbi, provided he made things easier for them. Personally I approve of the abolition of the second day with all my heart. I wish I could get the SAJ to do it, not because I believe that any spiritual gain would result from it, but I would feel that my own practice would conform more to my theory than it does at present.

Eliminate  
2nd day



For a rabbi, and a successful one at that, he is unusually interested in the theoretic aspect of the problem of Judaism. Not having received any guidance in the formulation of a consistent conception of Judaism, he fell with a great deal of avidity upon the little that I was able to give him while in camp. He read through most of my sermon and lecture notes I had brought along with me. He took to them like a duck to water.

The opening of the Teachers Institute (regular department) took place last Thursday, Sept. 18. Thanks to the conscientious and efficient help of Leo Honor I am relieved of the details connected with the examination and registration of students. All details are attended to by him and the various committees, so that <sup>all</sup> I have to do is to attend at the faculty meetings and give the courses in religion. At times I imagine that if I had concentrated on the Institute I might have really developed <sup>it</sup> into a highly specialized teachers training school. If I could have given myself up wholly to some of the better students I might have achieved what all great teachers have accomplished, but personal ambition did not let me work <sup>so</sup> ~~into~~ humble and circumscribed a field. This ambition has been encouraged by the appointment to the chair in Homiletics in the Seminary. Had I possessed the proper moral stamina and had I possessed the devotion and ~~xxx~~ fanaticism of a Benderly, I would never have accepted the position in the Seminary. I see my mistake after fourteen years of mental and spiritual dissipation. The philosophers tell us that vain regrets are worse than useless; therefore, let me go on with my tale of happenings.

The opening exercises of the Institute are always more impressive and significant than those of the Seminary. Besides my own talk in which I try to develop some thought in the meaning of the occasion, I call upon one of the faculty to address the students in





Hebrew. Here is another failure I have to register against myself.

*His knowledge of Hebrew* [Due to the lack of energy necessary to train myself to speak and write Hebrew with ease I am afraid to venture on those occasions to give an address in Hebrew. I believe I could after a few months of self-training speak with as much ease and fluency as most of the Hebraists, but I cannot afford to make a single mistake or to show the slightest hesitation in my discourse. I did try once - that was about three years ago when I delivered an address in Hebrew in Earl Hall before a Hebrew speaking organization and I did not come away with laurels. That was enough to put a quietus upon any further attempt to speak Hebrew in public. This fear has kept me away from the circle of Hebraists where I could have exerted a much needed influence and where I could have cultivated friends that might have been of great help to me.

Accordingly, I have to call upon some member of the faculty to speak in Hebrew, so as to give Hebrew tone to the meeting. But I promise myself if G. grants me life and health, that from now on I shall give the opening addresses in Hebrew.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, September 30, 1924

Thank God everything went off nicely at the services at the Leslie Rooms. I was more successful with the sermons than I was on previous years. But I had put so much effort into them that there is no danger of my becoming any too self-satisfied. I began working on the Rosh Hashonah sermons about three weeks ago together with Hadushin. Later Neulander and Chertoff joined us. We spent most of the time on the first sermon. I did not find their cooperation as stimulating as in former years. I have grown rather impatient of their failure to contribute any really helpful suggestions. Chertoff was the only one who goaded me on to be more specific in the statement of my ideas, but he does it so shrewishly that I would have preferred him to be as



silent as Neulander who always acts the sphinx of the party. Besides, a new factor has entered into my work and that is the desire to play up the SAJ. They engaged a publicity man on part time - one day a week - and he is after me to give him material for the press. This prevents a man like Kadushin from preaching the same sermon as I do on the same day. Hitherto he did not mind it. But since he has married Evelyn Garfiel, he must act upon his wife's suggestion to shine by his own light. In this she certainly takes the proper attitude. But when she came to me before the summer and asked me that I acknowledge my indebtedness to her husband's cooperation on one or two of the sermons that I happened to publish that time in the Review, I was flabbergasted. For there was not a single idea in either of them that I got from him. But I managed to take her suggestion calmly and so we remained friends. Thank G. for that.

---

The order of the service this year was as follows:

Sunday night (Sept. 28)

Minha 5:15 (standard time) Maariv service - omitted  
Kaddish after Amidah - Kiddush - Responsive Readings - The Sovereignty of God, p. 19 - Oleinu - Cantor sang 'אֱלֹהֵינוּ קִדְּשׁוּנוּ after my giving English translation of it. Prayer for New Year (my own) - Yigdal. Concluded about 6:00.

Monday morning (Sept. 29)

Service began at 8:00 - *שחרית* at ~~8:25~~ 8:25 - *שחרית* at 9:30 - Reading began at 9:40. Maftarah concluded at 10:20. I would suggest cutting that Maftarah short - Explained the meaning of the Shofar as announcing that God the Sovereign was holding levee; hence the idea of *שִׁבְעָה יָמִים* and then translated the idea into terms of ethical life. Followed explanation with reading of verses on Sovereignty of God, p. 19. After that read *שִׁבְעָה יָמִים* responsively.





Shofar ceremony concluded at 10:40. After *הלל* read verses in God's Justice and Mercy, p. 11. After the *פסוקים* were deposited in Ark I read "The Days of Awe" p. 92. Mussaph began 10:50. In the course of it read responsively the English *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. Omitted *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* and had no *הלל* ceremony. Mussaph concluded at 12:20. Cantor sang *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. Preached sermon till 1:12. Sang *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* concluded with asking parents to bless their children by repeating after me the

?  
Evening service, Sunday, Sept. 29

Minha 5:15. Maariv and kiddush. Responsive readings, God Everywhere, p. 6. Olenu - Read meditations aloud, p. 94. Yigdal.

Second Day -Tuesday morning

Service began 8:15 *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* at 8:30 (made possible by rushing through *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*). Conclusion of *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* at 9:17. Began reading of Torah 9:28. Conclusion of Haftarah at 10:05. Read the Sovereign God, p. 89. After Ashrei read responsively "Nothing Avails Without God," p. 64 and "God Marks Our Ways" p. 81. After the scrolls were put into the Ark Cantor sang *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. Mussaph service began 10:30. In the course of it sang *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* in Hebrew. Otherwise same as on previous day. Conclusion of Mussaph 11:50. Cantor sang *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*. Preached from 11:55 to 12:25. Concluded service with *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ* and *הַיְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ*.

The subject of the first day's sermon was "The Remaking of Human Nature." The subject of today's sermon was "Waging Peace."

\* \* \* \*

Wednesday, October 1, 1924

This morning there appeared in the Times an excerpt from the sermon I delivered yesterday. I gave that excerpt to our publicity man (Bergman) and he sent it to some of the English papers. While my vanity seemed flattered by seeing my name in print, my sense of values told me



I was a fool for making a show of myself. Yet I didn't I really want as many as possible to know that America is being groomed to play the role of Germany of the New World? If I were not so vain I probably would not be so sensitive about playing up to my vanity.

---

This afternoon a man by the name of Rabbi Raphael Bonimowitz called on me. He was a government rabbi in Odessa before the war, and served as a chaplain in the Russian army during the war. He came to this country in Jan., 1923, being among the last of the Zionist Jews to leave Odessa. His family is still in Russia.

The primary purpose of his visit was to get my advice on how ~~he~~ he might extricate himself from his present situation. He is at present Rav of the Herz Wolozhin on the Lower East Side. In describing his struggle he let me catch a glimpse of the corrupt bootlegging practices in which the old fashioned Orthodox Rabbis engage, not individually, but on an organized scale. They are paid liberal salaries for signing monthly permits for the issuance of wine. That wine is sold in many instances to occupants of brothels and gambling houses. The "Agudath Horrabonim" have engaged Emanuel Hertz, the brother of the English Chief Rabbi, as their lawyer to protect them against prosecution by the courts. He gets five cents on every gallon that is sold. Not being content with these earnings, he proceeded to sell wine on his own accord. When taken to task by the Executive Committee of the Agudath Horrabonim for selling wine, he replied that he acted no worse than they did. He might as well make a few dollars while the making was good.

Louis Marshall tried to put a stop to that traffic, but did not exert himself beyond writing a few letters and having one or two interviews.

I dread to think of the Hillul Hashem that will be caused by the exposure of this conscienceless violation of the law on the part





of the Orthodox Rabbiniim. When Rabbi Bonimovitz took them to task at their last convention (during the winter) for their brazen defiance of the law, and their jeopardizing the status of the Jews in this country he was howled down as a meddler and told to mind his own business.

\* \* \*

Saturday, October 4, 1924

Last Thursday night I attended a special meeting of about thirty members of the SAJ called for the purpose of making good the deficit for the next two or three years, so that we might be in a position to admit as members people who are not able to pay the present dues of \$75 per person. Unfortunately Simmons, in his desire to give the impression that the plan of covering the deficit in advance came from those present, pretended to have no plan in mind and called upon the members to suggest what would be the best way of making it possible for the society to enlarge its membership by admitting people who were unable to pay the full dues. Among the first to respond was Leblang. He did not think it advisable to throw the doors of admission to membership wide open, because it would be very difficult for the members "to mix." The women especially would find it difficult to assimilate an element with whom they could not mingle socially. He no sooner got through than I asked for the floor. I made it clear that Leblang failed to appreciate that as a society devoted to ethical ideals, we would be giving the lie to those ideals if we were to keep out people who were intellectually and spiritually eligible simply because they did not have the same financial rating as most of our present members. The discussion that followed was haphazard and unorganized. When two more members expressed themselves in somewhat the same vein as Leblang I could not retain my equanimity any longer and denounced their attitude as unworthy of the SAJ. I gave them to understand that those with whom they don't want to mix take the same attitude toward them.



Not once but a dozen times have I been taken to task by my friends who belong to the intellectual proletariat for wasting my time with the Jewish plutocrats who are intellectually and spiritually barren. I told them that they were a lot of Babbits; they needed nothing so much as the infusion of new blood. It was this mutual hatred between the business man and the so-called intellectual that was responsible for the poverty of Jewish life. I had hoped to bring the two classes together. As it seems, I am to be hampered in this purpose. By that kind of action they were only making revolutionists out of the intellectual Jewish classes.

After that the discussion again continued for a long time aimlessly. Abe Turrell and Wener frankly opposed my aim to democratize the SAJ. About 12:30 when they saw they were getting nowhere, May and Sam Lampert were asked to express their opinions. They both ~~made~~ made "corking" speeches in which they took sides with me and urged that the meeting proceed to call for contributions to meet the deficit. Within a short time about \$10,000 was subscribed. They need \$15,000.

Toward the end of the meeting attention was called to the booklet that I put out under the title "A New Approach to the Problem of Judaism." I had seen to it that at least a few copies be ready for that evening so that the members might be impressed with the efforts I am making to put the SAJ on the map.

While I am by no means elated over the results of Thursday night's meeting I believe that the pummeling which I administered to them will have a lasting educational effect. To that extent the meeting was successful. But from the standpoint of administrative efficiency, it was the most bungled affair I have attended in a long time.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, October 7, 1924

At the Seminary faculty meeting yesterday morning the sparks flew. It was the first time I believe, that Ginzberg attacked me at a

Ginz  
attacks  
Kap





meeting of the Faculty. He was provoked by my insistence that applicants for admission should be tested as to their general intelligence and personality. So far we have allowed a good many students to enter who, after graduation, reflect little credit upon the Sminary.

\* \* \*

Tuesday, October 14, 1924

The Yom Kippur services at the Leslie Rooms worked out very successfully. There was scarcely a dull moment at any time either at night or during the day following.

The following was the order of the service:

5:27, Kol Nidrei; maariv service; Resp. readings, p. 56; <sup>הלל</sup>

the English of <sup>הלל</sup> responsively (only one page <sup>הלל</sup>)

English of <sup>הלל</sup> "3" <sup>הלל</sup> sqq.; <sup>הלל</sup>

till <sup>הלל</sup> (which

was omitted throughout services) <sup>הלל</sup>; Sermon -

The Survival of the Fittest in Jewish Life, 7:00-8:05; <sup>הלל</sup>

8:00 Shaharith. Omit <sup>הלל</sup> p. 53 sqq. follow program as year before.

11:00 Reading and explanation of Haftorah - Gave historic background and interpretation as found in Gordon's commentary; (omitted reading from Union prayer book, p. 314.) Memorial service: Resp. readings, p.

79; Ps. 23; Congr. repeated <sup>הלל</sup> English of <sup>הלל</sup>; 12:00 <sup>הלל</sup> Resp. read. p. 81.

12:20 <sup>הלל</sup> sqq. same as last year except that before Abodah we had resp reading, p. 84 and after <sup>הלל</sup> read The Sovereign God, p. 89 explaining the obscure passages.

3:10 Mincha. In explanation of Javah represented him as profound hater of the Gentile word as typified by <sup>הלל</sup>. Omitted this year <sup>הלל</sup>.

There was no time for reading from Union Prayer book. 4:30 Neilah.

Omitted this year <sup>הלל</sup> and <sup>הלל</sup>. Concluded

at 5:40. Maariv concluded at 5:50



David Yellin of Jerusalem attended as guest of Sol Lampert. The latter told me that Yellin disapproved of my omitting *Kan for 1st* etc. He regarded it as tampering with that which *Plurim 1st*. He also missed the Bima in the center of the synagogue. Strange comments from one that is reputed to be a modern man and a visiting lecturer at Wise's Institute.

Another comment to the same effect came in the form of a letter from Lubarsky, C. E. After lauding my efforts in putting new meaning and life into the service he voices the sentiment of the older people who objected to what he seemed to imply were uncalled for omissions.

On the other hand my own Judith and some very young children simply balked when they had to repeat the *Kan for* for a second time.

Last Thursday morning Wise telephoned to me that I stop into the Institute on my way down town as he wanted to see me. When I got there he told me that Blau resigned as instructor of Midrash. He wanted to know whether I would be willing to teach Midrash until he found a successor to Blau. For fear that I might want to consider whether or not to comply with his request, he said that I must give him a definite answer at once. This time I felt that it would be cowardly for me to waver and therefore consented without further ado. Tonight I wrote to Adler informing him that I accepted the invitation to give a few lectures in Midrash till Wise would find a successor to Blau. I said "I could not refuse Dr. W's. request without appearing to take a hostile attitude toward him, an attitude that my conscience tells me would come dangerously near the category of *אכזר*."

I hope Joe Levy will succeed in committing H.L. Simmons and the other dilatory members of the Board to





Saturday, November 29, 1924

In my game against the destructive influences that are undermining the Judaism and Jewishness of the lay group I am working with, I feel once again as though I was stalemated. I have never had the sensation ~~of~~ that one associates with an aggressive game. It is always a case of being on the defensive and at the last point of defense, where one is actually cornered. All I have to do is to restrain myself by sheer force of will from admitting defeat. What I cannot decide in my own mind is whether the situation is really hopeless or I am too weak to deal with it.

The moment the holidays were over seventy per cent of the SAJ became invisible to me. The enthusiasm of the other thirty per cent has to be kept up by all sorts of artificial stimulants. As soon as I would let go for a few days, I imagine, the organization would disintegrate.

The plan of having the members meet once every three or four weeks to discuss principles of present day Jewish ethics should have worked out. In practice, however, it is the most difficult thing in the world to get the layman interested in principles of a general character. My ideal of Torah as outlined in the booklet "A New Approach" etc., has so far proved incapable of realization. We have had two meetings this year and neither of them brought the SAJ any nearer to the purpose I have in mind. With the aim of adding to the interest of the discussion I suggested taking up Maurice Samuels' book "You Gentiles" which is the "rage" just now as a basis for a number of principles I drew up regarding relations of Jews to Gentiles. The first meeting was well attended, probably because of interest in the book or out of curiosity. The second meeting which took place last Sunday was not so successful in spite of our having two outside speakers.

---



The other matter which is symptomatic of the difficulties I have to cope with in the SAJ is the question of building. The lease on the house where we are at present terminates next October. If the SAJ is to continue we have to secure new quarters. Unfortunately among the few who are active there exist divided counsels as to the way in which the SAJ should function. Hence they cannot agree as to the location of the building. H.L. Simmons, the chairman of the Board, is not interested in the synagogue activities, least of all in the services. He would very much have preferred to see the SAJ a popular organization with small membership dues, carrying on educational work and publishing books of Jewish interest. Joseph Levy believes that it is only through services and synagogue that it is possible to get and hold those who are in a position to finance the other activities of the SAJ. Just as to what those other activities are to be he does not seem to have a very clear idea. On the other hand, the other members of the Board with one or two exceptions are not vitally interested, and are looking for reasons why we should not build, so that they should not have to contribute toward a building fund.

---

On Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup> was one of the speakers at the Community Church at a meeting arranged by the Jewish Tribune to discuss the question "How to check race hatred and religious prejudice in this country." The other speakers were Dr. McFarland, Sec'y. of Churches of Christ (Protestant) and Judge Talley (sent by the Catholics.)

\* \* \* \*

Sunday, November 30, 1924

Is it possible that the dream of seeing the Teachers Institute housed in a building of its own will be realized? Some time ago my brother-in-law, Dr. Isidore Rubin, intimated to me that his father-in-law, Mr. Unterberg, had discussed with him setting aside various





monies for his children and for purposes of a communal character. Mr. Unterberg then mentioned to him that he wanted to put away about \$200,000 for Jewish educational purposes. If he was to contribute that money to the Seminary it was to go through me and to be used as a memorial for his parents. Last Tuesday morning Mr. Unterberg invited me to walk with him. At 8:15 in the morning I met him and we walked through the park. In his conversation with me he mentioned to me what Isidore had told me about. Having anticipated what he was going to tell me, I at once mentioned to him the advisability of putting up a building to house the Teachers Institute. He asked me to give further thought to his question and to see him as soon as I had a definite suggestion to make. This evening I went in to see him and repeated practically what I said to him last Tuesday in reference to the Teachers Institute. Moreover, I added that in view of the desire of some of the directors of the Central Jewish Institute to sell their 85 St. building perhaps that building could be acquired for the Teachers Institute. That did not appeal to him. As reasons he mentioned first that there was need for the Central Jewish Institute in that locality; secondly he did not consider it right to disturb the memorial aspect it bore in being dedicated to the memory of Sam Hyman; and thirdly its proximity to the 85 St. congregation which was hostile to what the Teachers Institute stood for. I really think he was right in each of these reasons. He was favorably impressed, however, by the suggestion of putting up a building that would house the Teachers Institute and he promised to let me hear right after the first of the year definitely as to the proposition that he would like me to make in his name to the director of the Seminary. That looks good!

\* \* \*

*Unterberg  
interested  
in  
contributing  
building  
for*

*T.I.*



Monday, December 1, 1924

I attended a meeting of the Program Committee of the SAJ this evening. Present were Drs. Rubin, Schulz, and Brand, Bromberg, Simmons, Harold Bernstein and Lang. For once the discussion was intelligent and fruitful. They approved of the general purpose of the meetings being that of developing a code of Jewish ethics. We decided that at the next meeting which is to be held in January, the members will state what ethical ideas will have been suggested to them by a play which is on the boards at the present time. The Best People. These reactions will enable me to formulate certain general principles relating to situations that arise in our domestic life.

Dr. Brand furthermore pointed out the inadequacy of the haphazard method by which we go about our task. He urged that a group of men should be led by me in the discussion of a more systematic and deductive presentation of ethical problems. Should such a group be formed and the plan carried out, it will be the first real evidence of self generated spiritual vitality in the organization.

---

My vanity was flattered this evening when two seminary men who came to see me about their sermons told me that they had met some students of the Union Theological Seminary who ~~xxx~~ spoke very highly of my address a week and a half ago at the Community Church. Those students charged the other rabbis they had been accustomed to hear with being demagogues. I could gather that they referred specifically to Wise.

\* \* \* \*

Tuesday, December 2, 1924

I had an unusual visitor in the artist and portrait painter Finkelgreen, a cousin of the <sup>Mr. P. Goldmans</sup> Goldmans who are members of the SAJ. A few weeks ago the Goldmans asked me and a few members of the Society





to come up to their house to see some pictures painted by this artist. The pictures are portraits of Jews of the old type in Jerusalem and of scenes about the Wailing Wall. The artist explained that these pictures were sketches which he intended to combine into a large picture representing the contrast between the old and the new Jewish life. I was not impressed by the pictures which he exhibited nor by his plan to spread them on a large canvass. It struck me as peculiarly inartistic for an artist to try to depict an idea in that crude way. That method is appropriate for lampoons but not for serious art. I did not say anything to him that evening, because it was none of my business to try to instruct one who claimed he was an artist.

When he came this afternoon he said it was with the purpose of getting my opinion concerning his projected painting. He claimed that he was anxious to utilize his art as a means of serving the national Jewish cause - a rather unconventional statement for an artist to make, which of course makes me suspicious of his ability as an artist -- and knowing of me through my former students and present colleagues he wanted me to advise him whether the picture he planned to paint was likely to serve the purpose he had in mind.

I must admit that the whole matter sounded fishy to me. But I dispelled all suspicions as to any ulterior motive in his coming to me and I explained to him why I did not approve of his projected painting. When he said he saw my point I ventured to go further and suggested to him the kind of picture that would represent a resuscitated Israel. In the foreground brawny sunburned Haqluzim and Haluzoth engaged in road building or at work on a farm. In the distant background a portion of the city of Jerusalem suggesting Jewish life of the past.

---

So far the attempt to acquire the plot on 81 St. between Central Park West and Columbus Ave. has been unsuccessful. A Jew,



Benison by name, owned the two houses on that plot and recently he acquired a third house adjoining them. Our people offered him \$375,000 for the plot 75 x 204 (running through to 82 St.) but he wouldn't sell. He promised to let our people know by tomorrow 5:00 P.M.

\* \* \*

Thursday, December 4, 1924

Read yesterday an excellent article by L.P. Jacks - The Challenge of Death - in Atlantic Monthly (Dec.) In it he develops same idea as in his booklet The Living Universe. It is the clearest presentation of conception of Divine Immanence as a basis of practical religion. It represents exactly what I believe in my innermost heart concerning God and the world.

---

I officiated at a wedding last night for the first time in months. I often wonder why I am not asked to officiate anywhere as often as some of my colleagues. As a rule people think very well of the manner in which I officiate. I merely ask this not because I am anxious to act as functionary at these ceremonies -- for I certainly feel squeamish when I think of the fee -- but simply out of curiosity as to whether the class of people I move among are not given much to marrying as those among whom my colleagues move.

The father of the bride, when he saw the . . . kept on asking whether I was writing the .

After the wedding I hurried to meet Dr. David Yellin of Jerusalem at the Pennsylvania Hotel. Of the twenty-five rabbis who had answered that they would come, only six appeared. Those present did not think they cared to trouble him to come over just for the few. I assume that he wanted to prepare the Rabbis for the coming Keren Hayesod Drive.





While waiting for him I had a chat with Salit, a seminary graduate who is occupying the ~~pulpit~~ pulpit in Far Rockaway. He is a man between twenty-seven and twenty-eight, rather aggressive and energetic but of limited knowledge and intellectuality. While a student at the Seminary he took up the study of law, so as to make sure that in case he did not succeed in the ministry he would have another profession to fall back upon. He is not the only one who goes into the ministry in this half-hearted manner. The ministry is a profession which a young man prepares for usually because of parental pressure, seldom the result of a man's individual choice.

As a result of his wavering he has a very limited Jewish knowledge and as a consequence of his legal training his power to think assuming that he had any, has been blunted. It seems that the legal training develops excellent ability to draw inferences from premises, but it incapacitates the mind from ever investigating the premises. In my contact with him I observed that he resisted my attempts to get him to examine the premise of traditional belief.

I was, therefore, exceedingly surprised last night when in a casual way he mentioned to me that he was becoming very radical in his thinking. At first I did not know what he alluded to as radical, but later he explained that he has come to look upon the world from the mechanistic point of view. When I prescribed Jacks to him he seemed to feel that he didn't want to be cured.

---

I also had a chat with Rabbi Joel Blau. He is a man of fine literary ability, somewhat of a poet and mystic and an extreme anti-pragmatist. I have heard that he is a man of strong sexual desires and that he finds it hard to conduct himself in the presence of women in conformity with his calling. I know that he always walks about with a chip on his shoulder and acts the highbrow.



For two years he was connected with the Jewish Institute of Religion where he taught Midrash. As a result of his resigning that post Wise called on me to give the lectures on Midrash. I was naturally interested to know from Blau what had led to his resignation. He was not very explicit. All I could gather was that Wise acted very arbitrarily doing things behind Blau's back, that Blau should have known about, and openly disputing before the students the wisdom and correctness of Blau's method of teaching. The JIR according to Blau, is entirely dominated by the spirit of the Free Synagogue and its faculty is divided between those who toady to Wise and those who would like to make of it a real institution of learning.

*Problems  
of JIR.*

Joseph Levy telephoned to me this morning that he learned today from Brenner that there is no use waiting for the 81 St. plot. He, therefore, requested me to get in touch with Simmons again and try to persuade him to buy the plot on 85 St. between Columbus and Amsterdam Avenues. I went to see Simmons at once and found him busy meeting salesmen. He could give me but a few minutes. When I asked him whether his mind was closed as far as the 85 st. Plot was concerned he said "Absolutely yes." He would not listen to any arguments from me in its favor because he might be influenced at the moment only to regret later that he had given his assent. He had the intuition that if we would build on that street we would become nothing more than an ordinary congregation. He would give his share toward a building if we acquired that plot, but his main interest would have to limit itself only to such work as we would carry on in our capacity as a society.

It is interesting how these businessmen who have had no formal education to speak of sometimes display evidences of mother wit that are astounding. In the course of the conversation I had with him he gave me to understand that in my impatience to see the SAJ housed I am





ready to jump at the first opportunity to secure a plot. To illustrate his point he mentioned that when his father used to take him to the shoe store he always declared the first pair of shoes that he tried as satisfactory in spite of the fact that they would pinch terribly, so afraid was he that if he took them off he would not get another pair. In a couple of days those shoes would have to go back to the shoe store. I thought that was a capital illustration, though the joke was on me.

---

A little while ago a young couple - Greenberg-Goldman - came to ask me to officiate at their wedding which is to take place on Dec. 10. The bride, Miss Greenberg, who is a teacher on English in Commercial High School, began to give me instructions about not ~~being~~ being too lengthy in my remarks and was telling me about what happened to a sister of hers at whose wedding Blau officiated. He was so long winded that she became hysterical. When I heard this I asked them to release me from the arrangement to officiate. I was determined not to accept their invitation, but when I saw that both he and she really regretted having said what they did I had to yield.

While they were trying to conciliate me in walked a little old man whom I had never seen before. I shut him up in the study till I got through with them. When they went away, he gave me his card - neatly engraved - which bore the name Abraham Harris from South Norwalk, Conn. He told me that the Jews of Norwalk have a young man of about 27 from the Yeshiva whom they engaged as a teacher and principal of a school of about 75 children at a salary of \$3000. He is assisted by a woman teacher. He is a college graduate and at present attends mornings to the Yeshiva and in the afternoon he is at the school. The young man has been trying to act as rabbi, but he is resisted in this by the more intellectual element. In view of the fact that they want to build a large school and to organize the community - about 250 Jewish



families - this Mr. Harris came to ask me whether I would be willing to deliver an address at a large meeting that they would arrange. He spoke a broken English though I suppose he has been a good many years in the country judging by the comfortable circumstances reflected by his engraved visiting card. In advising me what he would want me to speak about, he said that I should "open their brains" so that they would understand what Judaism is, what a Talmud Torah is, etc.

Of course I told Mr. Harris that I could not afford the time to go to South Norwalk.

\* \* \*

Friday, December 5, 1924

I am working at present on a course of six lectures on the philosophy of Jewish education. I find that the main difficulty in developing such a philosophy is the fact that it is necessary to devote an undue amount of explanation to the general question of Judaism, its meaning and its future. It occurred to me that a terse way of describing its future would be something like the following: Judaism will withdraw to Palestine, when Christianity is ready to withdraw from the world. Judaism will recognize Jesus as a prophet, when Christianity is a thing of the past.

\* \* \* \*

Wednesday, December 10, 1924

Last Saturday night I left for Portland, Me. to attend the installation exercises of my brother-in-law, Phineas Israeli. He was elected to the position about eight months ago. I do hope that he has at last gotten a position which he will be able to keep. He has by no means been successful in the ministry. I attribute his lack of success to his intellectual shortcomings. In a reform pulpit in a small town he would probably have been able to hold his own, but he is no match for the hard headed and hard hearted Jews who constitute the siman-





pure Orthodox congregations toward which he has always gravitated. It is true that he is entirely devoid of personal aggressiveness. But that lack being another aspect of his intellectual under-development calls forth contempt on the part of those who want a leader to be their superior in intellect and personality. Though he is my own brother-in-law I must admit that men of his type can not possibly do more than maintain the status quo of some struggling Jewish community. But as to creating new Jewish values, developing new Jewish ideas, he is no more fitted than the overwhelming majority of the men graduated by the Seminary. He belongs merely to the class of rabbinical bread-winners.

The Portland community numbers over <sup>seven</sup> ~~six~~ hundred Jewish families. The congregation of which my brother-in-law is rabbi has about 180 members which, I assume, means about 150 families. There are two congregations in Portland besides his. His congregation which calls itself "Etz Hayim" was organized in 1920 by a small group of somewhat Americanized Jews who could no longer endure the old Orthodox synagogue where the services are carried on in the most indecorous fashion and where Yiddish is the vernacular and where not even the slightest attention is paid to the young children. There were, however, too few of these Jews to build a synagogue on the main thoroughfare, so they put up a very homely brick structure in a back yard, which is off the main street. These younger people, however, have not the courage to ~~rely~~ rely on their own convictions, nor the time to attend the services frequently. Hence they defer to their fathers who constituted the privileged characters in the synagogue and who cause no end of trouble with their obstructionist attitude toward any improvement. That state of affairs exists in many New England cities where Jewish life is in a worse state of maladjustment to the American environment than anywhere else in this country.



I once asked someone to explain how it is that New England Jewry is the most hopelessly backward of any Jewry in America, and he answered me by saying that New England was the place where the least capable of our people remained. Any one of our people who possessed ability and initiative would always go west where the opportunities for making money had always been greater. I believe there is a great deal of truth in this explanation.

\* \* \* \*

Sunday, December 14, 1924

The installation exercises and banquet were carried out with a great deal of more promptitude and decorum than I had expected. There was, of course, a good deal of running around in the gallery and making of noise outside on the part of children, but the adults listened attentively and seemed to be able to follow the talks in English. My address got across and so did my remarks at the banquet. I was, of course, happy to note a genuine ~~xx~~ expression of satisfaction with my brother-in-law's work. I hope it will continue.

Since last Monday night my mind has been all awlirl again as to whether I should proceed with my work at the SAJ. The Board meeting which took place that night was so poorly attended and was carried on in such a lackadaisical spirit that I began to doubt whether I should permit them to think of purchasing ground for a building. After all, once they will invest in ground I am tied to them for life. So far they have not made good. They are not ready to make any sacrifices in time or money. Outside of two or three upon whom I might count for work, there is no one that can contribute anything toward the purposes for which the SAJ was formed, and these two or three and especially H.L. Simmons, are too preoccupied with their own business cares to have any energy left for this work. Just now, for example, Simmons is

Disappointed  
in  
S.A.J.





suffering a slump in his fur business. This means that he is doing absolutely nothing to carry out his own plan to increase the membership by reducing the dues to \$25 instead of \$75. The services are poorly attended, not more than fifty percent of the members ever visiting the services more than the few times on holidays. The program meetings upon which I had counted so much are not entertaining enough for them. They become easily sated. They have so many distractions, so many sources of diversion that they are blase. In this respect their children down to the youngest are even worse than they are. The few young people cannot be made to take an interest in anything intellectual or spiritual. They cannot even be induced to undertake anything of a social nature so tired are they of one another. They are just worm-eaten with boredom. Lately I have offered to conduct a group of men in the study of ethics and religion, provided I got at least 25 to come regularly. So far no one but the one who got me to make the offer - Dr. Brand, a dentist who is as ignorant of Judaism as he is of Chinese - is the only candidate for the group. With such deadheads I have been working for the last three years.

On the other hand, whenever I get a chance to concentrate on the problem of Judaism as a civilization, I see more and more light. I am beginning to find a workable formula for Judaism in the Diaspora. Only last week I hit upon the idea that Jewish nationality may function even in this country through a number of institutions (social practices) and agencies which the constitution of the United States permits to exist, and will probably permit for a long time to come. Chief among these are the prohibitions of intermarriage, an interest in the restoration of Palestine and in the synagogue. I am quite certain that if I could go on working uninterruptedly I might at least realize the dream of my life - to work out a clear formula for Judaism as a civilization both in Palestine and in the Diaspora, before my mental powers will begin to wane, which I understand is normally the case at 55.

Jud. as  
a living



Now which shall it be? It is very hard to break with the habits of many years, to have a public whether large or small, that look upon you as their spiritual leader. That they do very little because of their regard for you does not always enter into the calculation. Besides sometimes I am in hopes that if they buy ground and commit themselves to a larger undertaking they would be forced to increase the membership, and in that way some people who are qualified to further the SAJ purposes might be added to the ranks. As my thinking concerning the Jewish problem has brought me to a point where I feel more satisfied than ever that it is not inherently impossible for Judaism to survive for an indefinitely long time in America, that it is only a matter of arousing a group of the Jewish laity to become an exemplar of an enlightened Jewish life in this country, I naturally conclude that it is my duty to weather the storm and to stick to the post, despite its heartbreaking difficulties.

---

Last Friday morning I received a note in Hebrew from Dr. Z. P. Chayes, Chief rabbi of Vienna and President of the Zionist Committee asking me to get in touch with him. I met him just in passing several years ago in the Seminary and similarly at the Carlsbad Congress. This time I had occasion to become somewhat more acquainted with him. He attended the services at the SAJ Saturday (yesterday) morning and then accepted my invitation to lunch with us. I found him to be a very genial and unusually sane in his views about the needs of Judaism for a man of his scholarship, which is more on the order of the late Israel Friedlaender. His main object in coming to America is to get funds for the Vienna Teachers Institute which is attended for the most part by students - one third of whom are women - who come from East European centers. The Viennese neither send to nor avail themselves of students at this institution. He came to me thinking that I might influence the members of the SAJ to contribute. He is only one of the





many representatives of Jewish European institutions that appeal to me on the average of one or two a week to use my influence with the SAJ. How can I possibly help when I have been given to understand time and time again that I must not ask the SAJ for funds, because the people are beginning to complain that they are constantly being molested.

December 14, 1924

This evening I attended what to me is a most boring function, a Seminary dinner. The mere apprehension that I might be called upon to say something keeps me on edge for a week before, because I am naturally a very poor after-dinner speaker, and the fear that in case I am asked to say something I might make a faux pas. This evening I was called upon, Ginzberg being the only other member of the faculty to speak besides myself, and managed to come off with flying colors. While I had actually tried to find something to say, I had not succeeded more than to put together a few desultory statements, but as soon as I entered the room I took note of a few odd situations which suggested some remarks. That, <sup>together</sup> joined with the request by Adler that I say a few words about the Teachers Institute, enabled me to hit it off at just the proper speed and with the proper touch.

I felt offended when Stroock in dwelling upon the greatness of the various members of the faculty, not even so much as mentioned my name. I wonder whether Adler called upon me to compensate for Stroock's failure to allude to me. Anyhow, there never takes place an affair in the Seminary without something happening to me and to give me a sense of inferiority.

\* \* \* \*

Tuesday, December 16, 1924

Last night the Board of Trustees of the SAJ met together with the chairman of the various standing committees to discuss the question raised by a number of the more active women of the organization: "Why



the SAJ has not been making any headway for the last year?" The meeting was preceded by a dinner to make sure that it would be attended. At nine o'clock Simmons opened with a statement that he is not interested in a synagogue - he has been harping on that string ever since the building problem has been agitating - but in a Society that would bring the message of Judaism to the hundreds and thousands who at present stand aloof. Every one present that had anything to say took strong exception to his remarks, and emphasized the indispensability of congregational activities. After about an hour of skirmishing I asked for the floor. I outlined a more definite conception of the SAJ and of its relation to congregational activities than I had ever done before.

According to this new plan the SAJ is to consist of a chain of societies in congregations, Zionist organizations and similar bodies. These societies are to consist of those individuals in the organization who are ready to subscribe to the principles I have formulated as those for which the SAJ stands. The group here is to be the first SAJ unit of the present congregation. Hence I advocated their realizing that they must provide various congregational needs to their members. They must proceed at once with the putting up of a building. Toward the end of the address I began to lose control of myself and to urge them that they give an earnest of their interest in the work by making money sacrifices. Instead of my word having any effect the discussion hurtled along as though I hadn't said a word. They seemed to be totally impervious to my reasoning and pleading. This got very much on my nerves and I broke loose into one of my characteristic tantrums. I told them that if they will not right that very evening proceed with subscribing to the building fund, they are only bluffing. That was exactly the term I used. But I was sorry for it right the very next moment. I took advantage of the earliest chance to speak again to apologize for my outburst. The meeting dragged on till after 12 o'clock.





The only practical outcome was the decision to call a members' meeting to decide on the question of building.

I went away from the meeting very much downhearted and dispirited, fully determined to resign from the SAJ. When I got up this morning I was busy preparing for a wedding at which I had to officiate during the forenoon, and I have been working ever since for my lesson at the Seminary tomorrow. This has helped to dispel my gloomy thoughts.

I cannot help making note of the remarks made by one of the members who was present last night. Folstein is a successful real estate operator, father of a large family of grown up sons and daughters. He is ignorant and uncouth. All that he can see in our work is a small congregation worshipping on hard uncomfortable chairs. Those chairs are the bane of his life. His idea of a synagogue is not one, apparently, that appeals to the head, but that provides comfort to the bottom. That was the impression that was conveyed by his speech that was delivered in a jargon half English and half Yiddish.

\* \* \*

Wednesday, December 17, 1924

Dr. Berkson who acts in the capacity of critic teacher at the SAJ Hebrew school, accompanied me on the way home from the Seminary for the purpose of reporting to me on the work of the teachers. He pointed out that not only are the teachers ignorant of the subject matter that they have to teach, but that they are too indolent to put in the necessary preparation for each lesson. They are no worse than most of the other teachers in Jewish schools. So long as the teachers themselves will lack a sense of responsibility to the work, Jewish education will remain in the chaotic state in which it is at present.

\* \* \*



Saturday, December 20, 1924

Yesterday afternoon I presided at a meeting of the staff of the Israel Friedlaender classes. Chipkin's report of the work was encouraging. There are at present 290 students enrolled in the classes. A branch has been formed at Newark. The staff consists of nine men and two women all qualified for the work. If we had more money we could expand. The question of working out syllabi in history and Bible came up. With the continual change of teachers on the staff, it was difficult to maintain uniformity in method and point of view. With the members of the staff receiving nominal salaries they could not be expected to devote the time to the working out of syllabi. When Berkson suggested that he would undertake to write a syllabus on History I promised to get \$1000 as remuneration for the work. Of course I still hope that the SAJ will get out of its present mess and will begin to function. When it does it will be the logical organization to pay for the syllabus and publish it.

---

This afternoon George Hyman called on me. He is the son of the late Sam I. Hyman. He is 25 years old, a college graduate, married and father of a baby one year old; keeps in touch with academic work and engaged in the ostrich feather business which his father had left behind. He has a fine personality; he is not over sophisticated and would get along well with people. He came to ask my advice whether he should give up business and go into Jewish education. I wouldn't be surprised if the people he has been associating with all his life - the middle class successful Jewish merchants, manufacturers and real estate operators - would doubt his sanity. Such a thing has simply never happened in Jewish life in New York. That the son of a man who was a successful business man should go into Jewish work is simply inconceivable to them. I suppose he himself has not been very success-





ful in business due probably to his inability to give himself heart and soul to it. I am also in doubt whether he will be able to overcome the resistance to such a move, resistance which he will no doubt encounter among his family and business friends.

When he asked me as to whether there was any permanence to Jewish educational effort, I replied to him that I would be able to answer him in the affirmative, if I were sure that it is possible to stop the leakage which goes on among the Jewish middle classes. That is why I give a good deal of my energy to the Jews who are identified with the SAJ.

I also advised him to take work at the Seminary and get the rabbinical degree, in conjunction with educational theory and practice which he would have to take up in Teachers College. The problem of earning a livelihood during the next five years while studying for this new career is a serious one with him.

\* \* \*

Monday, December 29, 1924

Whew! This is more than I bargained for. I am beginning to feel the real taste of what it means to wrestle with stupidity and insincerity. I can now appreciate Ibsen's picture of Peer Gynt fighting with that invisible spirit which obstructs his faith and which forever eludes him - the Great Boyg. H.L. Simmons who for the last year has done absolutely nothing to further the progress of the SAJ maneuvered the organization into impasse from which it will require infinite patience and tact to drag it out. As I look back to the way he has been acting the last three years I see in him a remarkable incarnation of the Jekyll and Hyde type of character. There is no question that he possesses some fine and generous traits, but also some very mean and nasty ones. Among the latter is his complete lack of a sense of responsibility. Commitments don't seem to mean much to him. That



together with an exaggerated sense of ego has been responsible for the way he almost ~~ruined~~ ran the SAJ into the ground. As a result of the fiasco in which the chairman's dinner meeting ended two weeks ago he sent in his resignation as chairman of the board of Trustees.

The few that were present seemed to be completely demoralized by the turn of affairs. I made up my mind, however, that I shall not permit the SAJ to go to pieces because of Simmons' failure to make good. Unfortunately we have not a single person capable of being a lay leader of the organization. I felt at the meeting tonight that there was nothing left for me to do but do the steering myself so that the SAJ be not wrecked altogether. And what a time I had of it. It's that which made me start off this account with a "Whew!" Liebovitz, as acting chairman - Winer with his interminable speeches, Levy with his sulking, Siegelstein with his always missing the point, Bromberg with his insistence on blue prints, Lubetkin with his silence (I believe that the sum of all the words he has spoken since he has been attending the meetings of the Board amounts to about ten) and Mrs. S. C. Lamport who came late and who is hard of hearing, J.H. Rubin as a silent spectator; these are the people with whom I tried to save the ship of the SAJ. [I had to plead, to cajole, to growl, to get them to understand me and one another, and to make them realize that if they want to hold a members' meeting in January then the board must come with a definite plan as to where to build, the kind of building to be put up and the method of financing. After we were nearly through Mrs. S. C. Lamport objected that we had no right to come with ready made plans. We must first learn from the members what they want. When I succeeded in getting her to realize that that has been exactly the procedure which ~~xxxx~~brought about the present state of confusion and aimlessness she popped up with the suggestion that we ought to consider renting or buying the Portugese synagogue. When I questioned her as to the

December  
29, 1924





source of her information she named Mrs. Mendes who happened to drop a casual remark about the Portugese synagogue being for sale. After a great deal of effort I succeeded in getting the Board to decide to call a special meeting for next Monday, preparatory to the members' meeting on January 11.

*Rubin Family*  
*arg. w. Jena*

The worst feature of this struggle, as far as I am concerned is the lack of understanding and sympathy even from my own family. Jake understands somewhat but is too powerless to do anything. Max is a good fellow, and so is Isidore, but they have no interest whatever in the purpose of the society. They would like to see me make a big splunge, and if the society doesn't give me a chance to do it, I ought to get out from under it. My own wife at time displays a gleam of comprehension of what it is all about but suddenly that gleam is obscured and she attributes my difficulties to my irritability and to my inability to handle the members properly. She and I have never quarreled in all the sixteen and a half years that we have been married, but last Saturday when out of a clear sky, without any real provocation she burst out that my failure with the SAJ was due to my inability I was beside myself with rage and simply refused to discuss the subject any further with her. She has so far not shown the least sign of regret for what she said. Her action has hurt me more than anything that strangers could have done to me. I have never felt so alone in the world. But I must learn to take my punishment like a man, and I shall try to refrain from self-pity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Last night I spoke at Brownsville at the Hebrew Education Society to an audience of a few hundred, on Judaism as a Civilization. I was in good form and put the idea across. The audience was the most intelligent I recall ever addressing. The experience was like an oasis in a desert.

\_\_\_\_\_







